



THE BOYS' LIFE  
OF GENERAL  
SHERIDAN

WARREN LEE GOSS

B Sheridan

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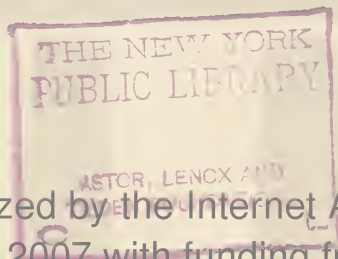
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# THE BOYS' LIFE OF GENERAL SHERIDAN

BY

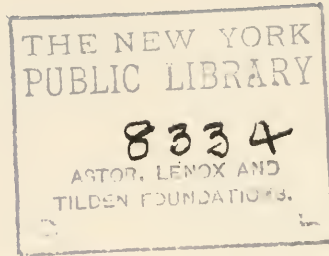
WARREN LEE GOSS

AUTHOR OF "LIFE OF GRANT," "JED," "TOM CLIFTON,"  
"JACK ALDEN," "IN THE NAVY," ETC.

"A brief life has been allotted to us by nature; but the  
memory of a well-spent life is imperishable."—CICERO.



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ROY W. W.  
1884  
1884

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CBS

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF  
MY WIFE

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## PREFACE

THE battle of Booneville, in which Philip Sheridan, as colonel of the Second Michigan Cavalry, won the first of those brilliant victories that thrilled the nation and made his name immortal, was fought just fifty-one years ago this July. The author's main purpose in preparing this work has been to commemorate by means of it the life and career of the skillful soldier and great general whose series of military triumphs began on that comparatively unknown field.

Not only does the history of such a life, so signally devoted to patriotic service in the way of leadership on the great battlefields of our Civil War, serve as an inspiration for every American boy and girl, but it supplies a noble example of the opportunities offered to poor boys under a government of the people. In recalling Sheridan's early years, one is again struck by the fact that Providence, in selecting the great leaders for establishing more firmly a government of the people, did not seek them among the rich and powerful, but among the poor and humble. It took Lincoln, the son of an illiterate backwoodsman; Grant, the son of a tanner; Sherman, the poor orphan lad; and Sheridan, the son of an Irish immigrant laborer, to lead the hosts of the people to victory and to establish liberty on broader foundations.

In the preparation of the material for this book the author has consulted among other authorities: "The History of the Civil War in America," by Comte de Paris; Swinton's "Army of the Potomac"; "The Shenandoah Valley," by George E. Pond; "Personal Memoirs of Philip Henry Sheridan"; "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War"; and "The Story of the Soldier" and "Thrilling Days of Army Life," by General George E. Forsyth. Of greatest help in securing vivid impressions of the events described have been the personal recollections of comrades who served under Sheridan and participated in his victories. It is the author's sincere hope that he has succeeded in bringing before his readers' mental vision a realistic view of the various scenes in which this leader of conquering armies had a part in the drama of the War for the Union.

W. L. G.

NEW YORK CITY;  
*July 1, 1913.*

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# The Boys' Life of General Sheridan

## CHAPTER I

### IN SCHOOL AND AT WORK

PHILIP HENRY SHERIDAN, who became one of the greatest generals in the War for the Union, was the son of John Sheridan, an Irish immigrant, who early in life had married a beautiful and capable girl of the County of Cavan, where they were both born. John Sheridan was a farmer and held a small leasehold, which he sold to obtain the money with which to seek a new home in the promised land to which so many of his countrymen had preceded him. Before leaving Ireland the Sheridans had two children, a son Patrick, and a daughter who died on shipboard during their passage to Quebec, Canada.

The Sheridan family arrived at Quebec in 1829, and from there went to St. John, New Brunswick; then to Portland, Maine; and thence to Albany, N. Y., where a Mr. Gainor, an uncle of John Sheridan, was living, and where they hoped for greater prosperity than they had hitherto been able to find. It was in

Albany, March 6, 1831, that Philip Sheridan, the future general, was born.

The prospect of obtaining a living in Albany not proving as encouraging as he had expected, John Sheridan with his little family moved to Ohio, where plenty of land was to be had at a low price. He settled in the town of Somerset, Perry County, where Mrs. Sheridan had relatives. Here Philip was reared and lived until he went to the Military Academy at West Point. Here, also, three more children were born to the Irish couple: a daughter Mary, and two sons, John L. and M. V. Sheridan, the latter a captain in the Union army during the Civil War.

Ohio was then the "Far West," a wilderness broken only here and there by an occasional settlement. The vast country beyond the Alleghanies was just being opened to emigration. The condition of the little Irish family was rough, as was also the condition of most of the people there, though the Sheridans, being late comers and very poor, had a little rougher time than their neighbors. But these primitive conditions developed brawn and manhood, stimulated the energies of the settlers and their children, and helped to make Ohio fruitful in great men, like Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan. It is not luxury and wealth that develop mind or body, and those who have them are not the quickest to seize great opportunities. Comparative poverty with a fair field for effort and ambition makes the bravest men and women. Ambition, like appetite, is stimulated by sparseness, not by luxury; great opportunities are often neglected by those who have

many advantages, while those who have few hungrily seize them.

Somerset was then, and still is, a quaint little town with a square, around which are stores and shops and from which four roads stretch out into the country, with houses scattered here and there. The march of improvements in these days seems to have missed Somerset, leaving it in its primitive quaintness. Old landmarks that were there when young Sheridan went to school still stand in all their old simplicity. The weather-beaten Court House—for at that time it was the county seat—still bears the touch of the early Irish settlers in an inscription over its portals, which reads: “Let Justice be done *if* the Heavens fall,”—which comes pretty near being an Irish bull.

The home of the Sheridans was that of a laboring man. The main building consisted of three rooms and was about half a mile from the village, on what was known as Happy Alley, where a few other small houses were scattered. There was an open prospect of fields and woods, and half a mile away on the left, over an orchard, could be seen St. Mary’s Female Academy, established in 1830 by a bishop of the Roman Catholic Church.

John Sheridan, though not well-to-do, was able by economy and industry to give his children most of the advantages of that country and time. While at work on the Cumberland or National Road, then being built, he was encouraged to put in a bid for a contract. As this was successful, it led to his making other bids



and finally to his taking up contracting as a business, which he followed for several years.

The mother was regarded by all her neighbors as a remarkable woman. She had excellent common sense, and was clear-headed, resourceful, honest, and industrious. She taught her children to work, and they were as well dressed and as well mannered as those of any of her neighbors. As the business of the father called him away from home much of the time, the management and training of the children fell upon her. It was generally agreed by Mrs. Sheridan's neighbors that from her Philip derived those forceful and remarkable qualities that made him one of the greatest soldiers of his time.

When old enough Philip was sent to school. There were then no such common schools as boys and girls who read this book attend. The one to which young Sheridan went was taught by an itinerant Irish schoolmaster named McNally, who received about three dollars a term for each pupil, and the additional compensation of "boarding round" among the families of his pupils, changing his boarding-place whenever it suited his fancy or convenience to do so. McNally, like most of the schoolmasters of the period, held strongly to the belief and practice that the rod was a very important aid and supplement to learning. It was said that when he was unable to detect the offender in any breach of school discipline, he reached the culprit by whipping the whole school. This Irish pedagogue was as capricious in his manner as he was unique in his methods. At one time he might be

stormy, scolding and whipping without much provocation, and at another all smiles and sweetness, tolerant of any mischief. It was said that Phil caught the extremes of both moods; for as the master was very fond of the lad, he treated him to both sweet and bitter as his moods changed.

One of the advantages which the master had in boarding around, and especially of coming unexpectedly to the new place, was in often learning things that his pupils would gladly have concealed. At one time, when he unexpectedly came to board at the Sheridans', he anxiously inquired, "How is Phil getting on, Mrs. Sheridan?"

"And why should you ask, Mr. McNally, when he has been in your school every day."

"But Phil hasn't been to school for two or three days and I surely was told, as coming from you, that he was sick in bed."

Thus was revealed the fact that while Mrs. Sheridan thought her boy was engaged in devouring "book learning," and the master thought he was at home sick, Phil, playing truant, was off fishing and swimming, or some other vagrant mischief. For this Phil received an extra dose of whippings, one from his mother and another from his teacher; and they were richly deserved, however unpleasant to the little fellow.

While his teacher had a kindly feeling for the little Irish lad, for in the main he was a good boy and learned his lessons, he had other favorites. One of these was a boy named Home, with whom—for some

cause, possibly from jealousy of the master's greater favor, Phil had quarreled. It was during recess when the quarrel came to a climax in a pugilistic encounter, in which young Sheridan gave his antagonist a severe beating. With tearful face and bloody nose young Home went with angry complaint to the master. Seizing one of the biggest of his collection of sticks, McNally sallied forth to punish Phil. The young culprit was seated on the top of a fence when he saw the master coming, and more than mistrusting that trouble was impending, fled as fast as his legs could carry him, the master in hot and close pursuit.

"Come back, you rascal!" cried the master. But Phil, never heeding, with many twists and turns led the chase into the heart of the village, among the shops and stores. His pursuer was close upon him, when the fugitive rushed through the open door of the tin shop of his friend, Sam Cassell.

"Hide me, Sam," he cried, "the master is after me!" Sam was working on a big copper kettle, and this he quickly lifted and the boy darted under it. When McNally rushed in, Sam was pounding at the rivets as coolly as though there was no boy under the kettle.

"Where's that rogue of a boy?" breathlessly cried the master. Sam made a motion with his hand toward another door, and went calmly on pounding at the rivets. The master searched in vain and had to go back to school without seizing the offender.

When Phil thought the master had had time to cool off, he walked into the school-room and went to his

desk, and the master never mentioned the chase or the threatened punishment. This shows that young Sheridan, at even that early age, knew when to advance as well as when to beat a retreat.

Under this capricious master, and another named Thorn, the boy studied arithmetic, grammar, history, geography, reading, and writing, and had no other schooling until just before entering the West Point Military Academy.

Those who knew the boy at that time agree that though perfectly fearless, he was not quarrelsome; but it made no difference how big the boy, or man, who attempted to impose upon him, or his friends, he at once got into trouble, and this disposition led the future general into many a fight. But fist fights, even among grown men and in public places, were a very common thing in those pioneer times. We take our justice and our exercise separately in these days.

Phil was an odd-looking boy, having a large head covered with a crop of brown hair, a long body, short bow legs, and long arms. When other boys made fun of his odd looks, the high-spirited lad would resent the impertinence with his fists. This led to so many encounters that it is said he whipped every boy of his size in town, and some few larger than himself. The townspeople of Somerset were afterwards fond of talking about the prowess of their hero, when he became famous, and maybe they exaggerated a bit.

At an early age young Sheridan showed his desire to be a soldier. Supplied with a bright tin sword by his friend, Sam Cassell, he organized the boys into a

company and trained them in crude boy manner. But the company usually broke up in mutiny, because all of the other boys wanted to be captain too, and this did not suit the little fellow who wanted to command them.

At fourteen years of age Phil left school and went to work dealing out sugar, flour, and calico in the store of a Mr. John Talbert, who for this service was to pay him twenty-four dollars a year, with the privilege of sleeping under the counter, as was the custom with clerks of Somerset. Here he made such a reputation for energy and exactness that at the expiration of his year he was offered a position at sixty dollars a year in the country store of David Whitehead. Before his year was up, the enterprising firm of Fink and Dittoe, drygoods merchants, made him an offer of one hundred and twenty dollars a year for his services. With the consent and advice of Mr. Whitehead he accepted the position. In those days and at that place, this was a large salary for a boy, though measured by the standards of to-day it was a small one.

The principal duties of his new position were keeping the books of the firm, which was no small task; where the business was conducted on the credit system; for the farmers, who were the principal customers, paid for their purchases only when their crops were harvested and sold, and even then often settled by giving a note. This shows that young Sheridan was exact and honest and had gained a reputation for honesty and intelligence.

The stores of Somerset, especially during the even-



ings, were gathering places for the men. Seated on the counters and boxes they debated public questions, and not only the affairs of the neighborhood, but those of the State and Nation, were criticised and, in the minds of the debaters, settled. Young Sheridan had employed his leisure with such good results that he was an authority in statistics and history, and was chosen to arbitrate the disputes that arose in these rural congresses.

At that time the Mexican War was being fought and its battles and marches were a never ceasing theme of talk and discussion. This so increased young Sheridan's desire to be a soldier that he would have enlisted had he been old enough. When he learned about the Military Academy at West Point, it became the height of his ambition to go there. Among those who sometimes came to the store was Mr. Thomas Ritchey, the Representative to Congress from that district, and Phil made his acquaintance. It did not seem possible to the young book-keeper that he could ever go to West Point; but when he learned that the boy who had been appointed from that district had failed in his examinations, he at once resolved to try for it. He wrote to Mr. Ritchey asking for the appointment. Without doubt the Representative had received other applications, backed by strong influences, for such appointments do not go begging in Ohio. But the letter of the little Irish boy was so well written and so manly that it appealed to Mr. Ritchey, and so, though not accompanied with any recommendations, he determined to appoint the writer. Fearing that

pressure would be put upon him to cause him to change his mind, he went that day to the War Department and had the warrant made out, and sent to young Sheridan the appointment for the class of 1849.

Upon receiving this warrant Sheridan set resolutely at work to prepare for the preliminary examination that precedes admission, under the direction of a Mr. Clark as his tutor; for his old teacher had departed to other fields, after the manner of itinerant teachers of that time. The months of preparation quickly passed. Sheridan had studied hard and was encouraged to believe that he could pass his examination for admission, though that which was to follow gave him much anxiety and many sleepless nights. Among the qualifications specified was the possession, by the candidate, of a pair of Munroe shoes, and no one in Somerset seemed to know what kind of shoes they were. Finally, to his relief, he learned that those shoes were a common pattern with a new or unfamiliar name.

On his way to West Point Sheridan stopped over at Albany to visit his father's uncle, and from there went down the Hudson River to the Military Academy. In a few days the examinations began, and to his joy he passed without serious difficulty; though he came near being rejected on account of his peculiar physical make-up, of which I have previously spoken. Considering his early lack of opportunities for education, he had reason to be proud of his success. There were many bright boys in his class, and among them several, including Slocumb, Stanley, and Crook, who became generals during the Civil War. As a new

cadet he had to pass through a vexatious course of hazing, to which newcomers are subjected by usage handed down from class to class. He took the ordeal without undue injury, though it must have been trying to his hot temper.

Though he had come through the preliminary examinations with fair success, he knew that the coming January examinations would be so much more severe that he trembled lest he might fail in them. He knew but little algebra and nothing of the other higher branches of mathematics. He resolved, however, with his usual stubborn pluck, to wrestle as hard as he could, and if he failed it should not be for lack of effort.

He was fortunate in having for his room-mate Henry W. Slocumb, one of the brightest boys of his class, and afterwards distinguished as a general. After "taps," when lights were supposed to be extinguished, he would darken the windows of his room with a blanket and, under the guidance of his room-mate, continue his studies far into the night. When the time came he went before the Board and passed the examination, which shows what pluck and industry can do. This success gave him confidence that he would be able to graduate with tolerable credit.

Cadet Sheridan passed through his first two years successfully, and then came his furlough, or vacation, when he went home to Somerset, taking with him two classmates, one of whom, Crook, afterwards served under him as a general during the War. Of course he was the hero of the little village for a time,

and there are many traditions there of him during his vacation summer. It is said that he thrashed a local lawyer, twice as large as himself, for making unpleasant remarks about his father and mother.

He returned to the Military Academy with the expectation of graduating with the class of 1852, but fate, or the boy's peppery temper, set him back a year. In September, 1851, while his company was forming for drill, Cadet Tirrell had ordered him, in such an insulting manner, to "dress" that Sheridan's Irish temper got the best of his discretion, and he started with lowered bayonet to prod the offender, but recovered his senses in time to save himself from an unpardonable breach of military discipline. A cadet at West Point is, to all intents, a soldier, and must obey the order of his superior, no matter how it is given. Tirrell reported young Sheridan, at which, he, still more indignant, again attacked Tirrell with his fists, in front of the barracks, and if all reports are true gave him a good beating.

At that time the boys from the South were the ruling element in the Academy, and no doubt their superior airs and manners had, before this occurrence, offended the more democratic Irish lad, reared in a different social atmosphere. An officer of the Academy parted the contestants while fighting. Each of them handed in an explanation, but as Phil admitted that he was the attacking party he was suspended for a year by the Secretary of War. He would have been disgracefully discharged, but that the Superintendent, on account of his previous good record recommended

otherwise. So, while there was no doubt about Tirrell's insulting manner, it was not for a cadet to punish him for it.

Very much crestfallen and humbled, Phil Sheridan returned to his home. His humiliation would have been still harder to bear but for the fact that his former employers, Fink and Dittoe, were glad to secure his services as a book-keeper during the year of his disgrace.

In August, 1852, he joined the graduating class at the Academy, taking his place at the foot of his class and graduating with it in the following June. His standing was thirty-four in a class of fifty-two members, among whom were the brilliant James B. McPherson, who, as a major-general, was killed before Atlanta; John M. Schofield, afterwards a distinguished general during that war; and John B. Hood, who commanded the Confederate army at Atlanta during Sherman's campaign before it, and other distinguished soldiers. So, considering his disadvantages of early education, he did pretty well in competition with such brilliant students.

At the close of his final examination Sheridan was appointed a brevet second lieutenant of the First Infantry and received his commission in July, 1853. He was well pleased to graduate, and set his face resolutely to the future; and though he had no suspicion of the high destinies that fate had reserved for him, he looked forward to military life with pleasant anticipations.



## CHAPTER II

### FIGHTING THE INDIANS

WE have seen how well young Philip Sheridan used his opportunities to secure an education, and we know what a great general he became later; but most men have to serve a kind of apprenticeship in obscure work to show whether they are fit for great places. And now comes such a period in the life of our hero.

The young people of this generation know little of war except as they read of it; but the books tell you that from the earliest settlement until very recently there was never a generation that did not see real war. Our fathers could only protect their rights by fighting the French on the north, the Spanish on the south, the English from over-seas, and the Indians all the time and everywhere. As the white man's frontier pushed westward, it was always against hostile Indians. After the discovery of gold in California there were two frontiers pressing in on the Indians, until they made their last stand among the fastnesses of the Rocky Mountains.

Sheridan was too young to have taken any part in the Mexican War, where so many officers of the Civil War got their military experience; but he was in time for what was nearly the last Indian wars, and it was with the aboriginal people, making almost



their last stand on their native soil, that he got his chance to show his mettle.

Our people have always objected to a large standing army, and the few regiments we had, before the Civil War, were scattered far and wide over the country, some doing garrison duty at the various forts and some out on the plains guarding the frontiers from Indian attacks. When young Cadet Sheridan of the Military Academy became Lieutenant Sheridan of the regular army he, with his love of adventure, probably thanked his stars that he was detailed to duty on the frontiers rather than at some peaceful Eastern garrison.

If you wish to follow him to his first post of duty, you would better get out your maps, for it is a roundabout course to follow. Bear in mind that this was before the days of transcontinental railways, and a person going from the eastern to the western seaboard either crawled over the desert and mountains for months in an ox-cart, or went slowly down to the Isthmus of Panama and up the Pacific coast in a sailing vessel. If on land, he stopped when he was hungry, kindled a fire, and cooked his own meals. When night came he slept in the cart or on the ground. But this rough life was probably just what a handy fellow like young Sheridan would like.

After a furlough of three months at home, he started to join his company at Fort Duncan on the river Rio Grande, in Texas. He journeyed down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, across the Gulf of Mexico by steamer, and then by an inland route to

Corpus Christi, the headquarters of the Department of Texas. Here he met several of his West Point acquaintances, among them Jerome Napoleon Bonaparte, who afterwards accepted a commission in the Imperial Army of France. Here he took an army wagon train to Laredo, one hundred and sixty miles from Corpus Christi, enjoying by the way the novelty of seeing huge flocks of geese and ducks, herds of antelopes, wild mules, horses with waving manes, and some with tails that almost swept the ground. At night he spread his blanket on the grass, and slept beneath the stars as only tired boys can sleep. From Laredo a six-mule team took him to Fort Duncan, which he reached March, 1854.

This fort was intended as a protection against Indians, and shortly after his arrival Sheridan was sent on scouting duty against them. On these tours of duty he made surveys and maps of the country, and picked up a little Spanish from his Mexican guide. From one of his soldiers who was an accomplished hunter he learned to approach game, which was abundant, and to dress and care for it. He soon became so skilled in hunting that he was able to supply the garrison so abundantly with wild turkey, geese, antelope, and deer, that the beef contractor became angry because there was no demand for his meat. At one time, while out hunting, he located by a column of smoke some hostile Indians of whom a company, commanded by Captain Van Buren, was in pursuit. That officer, thus set upon the lost trail, pursued the Indians until they, exhausted, halted on the open plain

and gave battle. Both Van Buren and the Indian chief were killed in the battle and the rest of the savages ran away.

When the time came to go into winter quarters, the officers, living in tents, were made uncomfortable by the cold winds, called "Northers." Our young lieutenant made himself more comfortable by building himself a hut of poles set into the ground around a small square, over which he pitched a roof of poles thatched with prairie grass. The ground inside was leveled for a floor, and a fireplace of stone cemented with mud was built in one corner. The furniture consisted of a bureau, a chair, and a few camp stools, and a washstand made by setting four sticks into the ground and nailing a piece of board on top of them. This top cost him more than all the rest of the furniture, since the only board to be had was from boxes in which their bacon came, and these were reserved to make coffins for the dead. In this rude hut he spent a comfortable winter and no doubt enjoyed it more than he did the most luxurious quarters afterwards.

During the winter their recreations were dancing, and horse-back riding, varied by an occasional swoop around their garrison of the Indians. During one of these raids the Indians killed a boy who had formerly been a drummer but who, at his discharge, had turned herdsman. They found him filled with arrows, but he had made a brave fight before being overcome; for near him were two Indians whom he had killed, and it was afterwards learned that he killed and

wounded others before he fell. These Indians were pursued, but they fled across the river and could not be taken there, as it was on Mexican territory. Such were the scenes on the frontiers where our young officer began his career as a soldier.

In November Sheridan was transferred to the Fourth Infantry, then scattered among various stations in California and Oregon. Returning to New York, he joined a few recruits that had been gathered on Bedloe's Island, where the Statue of Liberty now stands at the entrance of the harbor. He then made the voyage to San Francisco, by the way of Panama, and joined his company at Fort Reading, California. Here he was ordered to relieve Lieutenant Hood (afterwards a Confederate general), who had already started ahead as an escort of Lieutenant Wilkinson, who was surveying a route for a railroad to connect the Sacramento Valley with the Columbia River in Oregon.

The country to be traversed was infested by Pitt Indians, a wretched lot of hungry savages who would kill a man for a few mouthfuls of food and his blanket. The streams where they had caught fish for their food had been contaminated by the miners, so that there were but few fish to be caught and the Indians were both hungry and desperate. The commander hesitated to let him go on such a perilous detail, but Sheridan insisted, and with an escort of three men fearlessly started out to overtake the surveying party.

The first day out he came upon one of the members

of the expedition, who on account of illness had been left at a hunter's hut. This man urged that he was well enough to join the party, and Sheridan took him along; but before the day's journey was over he gave out, and was left behind with one of the party to care for him. So, instead of gaining a recruit for his party, Sheridan had lost one.

During the following day, hearing voices ahead of him, our young lieutenant surely thought he was near the surveying party. But on cautiously approaching, in the direction of the voices, he found it was a party of Pitt Indians. They were following the trail of the surveying party. Sheridan followed them cautiously for several days, during which he crossed the lava beds afterwards made famous during the Modoc War.

At last they came to the beautiful valley of Hat Creek, where luxuriant grass and wild flowers abounded. Here, following the trail, he was soon right in sight of the Indians. Concluding that he must either fight or run, and his little party being mounted while the savages were afoot, he made a dash for the widest part of the valley, but was brought to a halt by a deep creek with precipitous banks over which he could not get the horses. The Indians, meantime, made friendly signs, wading into the creek to show the fording place, and as there was little choice Sheridan and his two comrades crossed the stream into the midst of the enemy. When on the opposite bank, to his joy he saw the encampment of the surveying party below them. Probably the only thing that had saved them from being killed and



scalped was that the savages had not seen them before they were near this encampment.

The two men that Sheridan had left behind were now sent for, and Lieutenant Hood, whom Sheridan had relieved, started back as ordered. Without serious encounters with the Indians the surveying party, after a three months' journey through the wilderness, reached Portland, Oregon, October 9th., and were soon after encamped on the Columbia River near Fort Vancouver. Settlers had already begun to take up farms in that country.

Lieutenant Sheridan was soon detached from his command, and detailed to the command of a detachment of dragoons, in the expedition of Major Rains, of the Fourth Infantry, against the Yakima Indians. These Indians had killed their agent and driven back an expedition that had been sent against them, capturing a number of men and two small cannon. The object of this second expedition was to retrieve the disaster. It was made up of a small body of regular troops and a regiment of mounted volunteers, all commanded by Colonel Nesmith, afterwards United States Senator from Oregon. The whole was commanded by Major Rains, who proved incompetent, though he had a commission as brigadier-general from the governor.

On the second day out Sheridan captured a large amount of the winter food of the Indians, and then struck out for the Yakima Valley. In passing over the dry soil the troops made so great a cloud of dust that little could be seen beyond it. Through the mis-



management of the commander the Indians got away, but Sheridan, learning that they had escaped up the valley, pressed on in pursuit. While trying to find them he saw a dense cloud of dust between him and the position where Major Rains had intended to encamp for the night. It looked as though the Indians had got between him and the main force, and that they greatly outnumbered him. But without more ado he ordered an advance to cut his way through them. Without waiting to fight, the opposite party turned tail. Sheridan's troopers followed in hot pursuit, until they found that they were driving into camp a party of Oregon Volunteers, that had mistaken his company for Indians. Both parties were relieved as well as amused.

The next day they pursued the Indians until the latter halted on a ridge where, naked and painted in brilliant colors, with decorations of scarlet cloth, they paraded back and forth with insulting gestures and threats to charge down the heights. This so angered the men that, without permission, they charged on them and drove them from the hill. No sooner had the soldiers returned to their former position than the savages were again on the ridge making the same insulting demonstrations. Sheridan proposed a plan by which he thought they might be driven out and captured, but was not permitted to carry it out. The next day found the Indians still on the hill, where they were charged by the infantry, while Sheridan passed through a cañon into the upper valley. The Indians ran away without fighting, and that night Sheridan

went into camp near a Mission which had at the outbreak of hostilities been pillaged and Father Pandoza, its priest, carried off.

The pursuit was continued but winter was upon them, and at night they would spread their blankets on the snow, to find themselves covered by a white blanket in the morning. The Indians fled into a region where they could not be followed. The campaign was a failure, and our young lieutenant again returned to Fort Vancouver.

The poor results of this second expedition greatly encouraged the Indians to resistance, and all of them east of the Cascade Range banded together to fight the advance of civilization. This finally brought on the Indian war of 1856. The Ninth Infantry was sent from the Atlantic coast, and with it Colonel George Wright, who took command in place of Major Rains, and made the objective point of his operations the upper Columbia River.

On the morning of March 26, the movement of troops began, but the Indians made an unexpected attack between Vancouver and Dalles. They killed several men, women, and children, captured the Portage, and besieged the settlers in their cabins at the lower Cascade. Some of the settlers had taken refuge in a military blockhouse and resisted them at the Middle Cascade. In this emergency Sheridan was sent forward to establish communications with the settlers, which meant the recapture of the Cascade. With only forty men he started on a steamer up the Columbia River. Here he found the Indians had taken position

on a narrow neck of land near the lower Cascades, where they could not be easily attacked by his small force. He sent back a report of the situation by the steamer and then, with a large boat he had retained, crossed his little command to the opposite side of the river and made his way along the mountain base until opposite the blockhouse.

On his way he crossed to an island midway in the stream and captured some old Indian women who were left behind. By threats he kept them silent, and then made them help his men tow the boat up the rapid. To see what the Indians were doing he went up the steep mountain that rises from the river, where he could see over the island. With his glass he saw that they were enjoying themselves by racing horses and other games. The Indians, in their war bonnets and painted naked bodies, with the young squaws in red blankets, made a gaudy appearance; but he could not stop to witness their festivities, for should the Indians discover what he was about they could easily come over to the island, when he would be in great peril. He soon got the boat opposite the blockhouse, where the water was smooth, and communicated with the besieged settlers to let them know that help was at hand.

The advance of the rest of the troops soon arrived and Sheridan communicated the situation to the lieutenant commanding. He then said, "If you will push your men down the main shore, it is my opinion that the Cascade Indians will cross to the island, while the other Indians will flee to the mountains; then if

a part of your men will join me I will cross to the island and capture the whole band." This was done and the entire body of Cascade Indians, men, women, and children, were captured; while, as he predicted, the Yakimas fled to the mountains.

The captured Indians were terribly frightened and declared it was the Yakimas that had killed the settlers. Sheridan disproved this statement by drawing them up in line with their muskets, and then passing down the line inserted his fore-finger in the muzzles of each rifle and then holding up his finger showing that it was blackened with powder. This was convincing evidence of their guilt in taking part in the massacre of the whites. Nine of the leaders were selected, tried, and hanged; and this had so good an effect that the subjugation of the allied bands soon followed.

The successful termination of this campaign was principally the work of our young lieutenant, and General Wool, who had come up from San Francisco, was so much pleased with results that, in his report to General Scott, he mentioned our young hero in such commendatory terms that General Scott complimented him in General Orders by saying; "Second Lieutenant Philip H. Sheridan, Fourth Infantry, is specially mentioned for gallantry."

Shortly after this he was sent, with his detachment of dragoons, to take station at the Indian reservation in Yamhill County, Oregon. The purpose was to give permanent homes to the restless bands of roving Indians, who kept the settlers in constant fear.

Several tribes were settled there, and afterwards the Chinooks were taken here from their homes in the Willamette Valley. Sheridan learned their language, as it was one that most of the other Indians could speak. When these Indians had got beyond the control of their agent, Sheridan had been sent to the latter's relief. He found him besieged in his blockhouse. He found also that the poor Indians were half starved and that the prospect of being wholly starved had caused the trouble. Food was soon supplied to them, and the young lieutenant then joined his company again at Fort Yamhill, where Captain Russell (afterwards a prominent general in the Civil War) was in command.

Captain Russell assigned to Sheridan the duty of keeping the Indians in order. As he could talk their language like a native, he was able to render valuable service on many critical occasions. Illustrative of this were his negotiations with the Indians when it became necessary to build a blockhouse for the protection of the agent at Yamhill Bay. The Indian burial-place was the only good site for the purpose, as in other places around the bay the land rises abruptly from the water. When Sheridan first made the proposal to take the burial-ground, the Indians objected very strongly; for there is nothing so painful to an Indian as disturbing his dead. But he assembled them for council and talked with them all day in their language, until at last it was agreed that the land would be given for that purpose.

Their dead were buried in canoes which were set



on the crotches of trees. All the property of the dead was also placed in these canoes with the body of the deceased Indian, so that he might go to the Happy Hunting Grounds in proper state. These canoes were infested with wood rats of a peculiar species, with tails like squirrels. The next day, when according to the agreement the canoes were to be set adrift on the water, the soldiers anticipated great fun in seeing the rats try to escape. But when the canoes were taken down not a rat was to be seen. The Indians declared that they understood the Chinook language and that they did not wish to accompany their dead to the Happy Hunting Grounds and had made for the woods.

Sheridan had some trouble with the Rogue River Indians, who had fought our troops savagely but had been obliged to give up, though they said they did not wish to follow the ways of the pale-faces. They would kill their horses on the graves of their dead and destroy their property, believing that they should undergo privations while mourning for their dead, and Sheridan had to talk them out of this. In all troubles Lieutenant Sheridan's practical sense and sound judgment, as well as the warm-hearted interest he took in promoting the real welfare of the Indians under his control, produced the best results.

He continued on these duties without incident worthy of record until the outbreak of the Civil War. As he was intensely loyal, the news of the firing on Fort Sumter made him desire to do his part in fighting for the Union. When the orders came for his



regiment to go East, to his chagrin he was left, a second lieutenant, in command of the post. September 1, 1861, he was relieved. In consequence of the resignation of Southern officers he had now attained the rank of captain of the Thirteenth Infantry, of which General Sherman had been made the colonel.

When he embarked for the Atlantic Coast via Panama, the Secession element was so strong in California that it was feared the steamer on which he embarked might be seized and carried into some Southern port; so he banded together with other loyal passengers to prevent such an unpleasant emergency. He reached New York safely, however, and started to join his new regiment at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri. On his way he stopped off to see his father and mother, whom he had not visited for eight years.

While on the distant frontiers of Oregon, Sheridan had heard of the secession of South Carolina and other Southern states; the organization of the so-called Confederate Government on the 4th of February, 1861; the inauguration of war by the firing on Fort Sumter by the rebels on the 11th of April; and the call of President Lincoln for seventy thousand troops to enforce the laws which were being obstructed by armed rebellion in the South. The battle of Bull Run, which had been fought on the 16th of July, 1861, took place while he was still in Oregon, and exaggerated accounts of the defeat of the national army reached him there. This battle had, though a defeat, roused the North

and breathed into it a national spirit, obliterating party lines and inspiring the people with a vigorous patriotism looking to the restoration of the Union.

Missouri, though a slave state, was held for the Union by the loyal people, though her governor was disloyal and had attempted to carry her into the line of Confederate states. General Lyon, with a few followers, had disrupted the plans of the secessionists by capturing Camp Jackson and the Missouri rebels gathered there. In a battle that followed, at Wilson's Creek, Lyon was defeated and killed; and the Confederates, gathering headway, threatened to spread their power over the entire state.

The plan for the campaign by the national troops for the year 1862 in the West was to open the Mississippi River, thereby cutting in twain the Confederacy, shutting off its supplies from the west, and restoring to the western states the great commerce of that section. The Confederate line at that time extended from the Cumberland Mountains to the Mississippi River, and two forts, Donelson and Henry, were the Confederate sentinels guarding the Cumberland and Tennessee rivers, the great highways for trade and war. On the 14th of February General Grant had captured these two forts and exacted an unconditional surrender of the army guarding them, thus not only opening to navigation these two highways for a considerable distance, but causing the Confederates to abandon the rest of their line and to concentrate their army, under General Johnston, at Corinth.



GENERAL LYON AT THE BATTLE OF WILSON'S CREEK.



Such, in brief, was the general situation of affairs when Captain Philip Sheridan arrived at the seat of war in the West and found General Halleck in command of the armies, with his headquarters at St. Louis.

## CHAPTER III

### A TALK ABOUT WAR

It is naturally to be supposed that boys and girls who read this book do not know about the terms used in war. Those who would like to learn about them should read this chapter, those who already know about them, or who do not care to learn, may skip it.

We have followed Philip Sheridan through his rugged childhood and boyish success in a country store; through his hardly-won professional course at the Military Academy, and his early Indian fighting on the frontiers. Now we are about to see how he became one of the three greatest generals in the greatest war known to history.

War is a very ancient occupation, far older than agriculture or manufacturing or commerce, and has become a skilled art built upon a careful science. It has a language of its own and if we spend a little time learning what some of its commonest terms are, and what they mean, we can read this story more understandingly,—just as one who knows the rules can watch a ball-game more intelligently. If we bear in mind that to be a great general one must not only know military science and be skilled in the art of war, but must have great genius as well, we shall under-



stand what a great thing it was that a poor little country lad like Phil Sheridan became such a great figure in such a great war.

At first battles were fought by men in mobs, armed with sticks and stones. Then they learned that they could fight more effectually if trained to act together and they began to use darts and javelins as weapons. The ancient Greek armies were organized in phalanxes; the Romans, in legions. The modern unit of military organization is a regiment.

A full regiment consists of a thousand men, divided into ten companies of a hundred men each. The officers at the head of a regiment are the colonel, lieutenant-colonel, and major. At the head of a company is a captain, and next to him in rank are the first and second lieutenant. Sometimes there are brevet officers. That means they are to have the position when there is a vacancy. The second lieutenant is the lowest commissioned officer, and he may resign from the army when he pleases; but non-commissioned officers (sergeants, corporals, and sergeant-majors) and privates are enlisted for a term of years, and to absent themselves without leave is desertion, for which they may be court-martialed and shot.

The colonel's duty is to see that his regiment is equipped and drilled and kept in the best possible condition; and he leads or directs them in battle. The lieutenant-colonel and major act under the colonel's orders and take his place if he is killed or wounded. The captain leads or directs his company, aided by his lieutenants. Sergeants execute minor orders from

commissioned officers, and each of the ten corporals of a company looks after a "mess" of ten men. Besides the commissioned officers named there are a chaplain, who is the clergyman of the regiment; a surgeon for the sick and wounded; an adjutant, who is a kind of secretary and accountant; a quartermaster, who has charge of the tents and baggage and who issues clothing; and a commissary, who buys and issues rations. Each regiment has a band of musicians, whose duties are varied. In war the music is most often a fife and drum. When in presence of the enemy as a general thing no music is allowed, as it may inform the foe of the locality of each regiment. The buglers, or drummer and fifer in infantry, sound the *reveille* by which every one is warned to get up in the morning for roll call; and the drummers also order "lights out," or "taps" as it is called. All through the day at a military post there are varied calls to duty sounded on the bugle or with fife and drum. In cavalry most of the orders in battle are given by bugle calls, and the horses learn the calls about as quickly as the men do. Sometimes they put a raw recruit on a horse which has learned the calls, and the horse will carry his rider through all the evolutions correctly. When the garrison flag is raised in the morning and lowered at sundown, and when there are distinguished visitors, the band plays the national airs. On the march music cheers and regulates the motion,—a quickstep hastening the time, a slow march delaying it. In battle, orders to charge or retreat are given by the trumpeter; but not always, for fear of informing the enemy.

Two or more regiments acting together are a brigade, and the officer in command is usually a brigadier-general. Two or more brigades form an army division, which is usually commanded by a major-general. An army corps is composed of a number of divisions and is commanded by an experienced major-general. A lieutenant-general outranks a major-general, and that rank in our armies has been given only to Washington, Scott, Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan.

Soldiers enlisted in the service of the Federal Government are called regulars; those in the service of any state are militia. Those who enlist in time of war and are mustered into the service of the United States are known as volunteers. Mounted troops are cavalry; foot-soldiers, infantry; those in charge of heavy guns, artillery. Engineers have charge of pontoon trains and build bridges; they lay out and build forts and other defenses; they also lay mines to blow up forts.

In order that friends may be distinguished from enemies, there is an army uniform. In the Revolution our uniform was blue and buff, but sometimes the men were too poor to have anything more uniform than a sprig of evergreen in their caps. Our present uniform is blue, but khaki is largely worn, especially in warm weather, because it is cool; also it is an obscure color and does not form a good target. The uniform not only shows the army to which a soldier belongs, but his branch of the service and his rank. Orange trimmings show that a soldier belongs to the engineers; red, artillery; yellow, cavalry; light blue, in-

fantry. A commissioned officer wears shoulder straps with devices to indicate his rank—four stars for a full general; three for a lieutenant-general; two for a major-general; one for a brigadier-general; and an eagle for colonel, etc. A non-commissioned officer wears chevrons on one sleeve, and has, as also do the privates, the letters of his company and number of his regiment on his cap. He also wears a badge which shows the army corps to which he belongs.

In times of peace there are no volunteer troops; the militia assemble on their state camp grounds once a year for drill, and local armories are built in large towns where they can assemble for company drill; while the regular army is scattered among the various forts doing garrison duty. All forts belong to the Federal Government and not to the states.

In ancient times cities were built on hills or other defensible places and were guarded by great walls and strong gates. In the Middle Ages kings and nobles built themselves strong castles in which they were always on guard against enemies. In modern times cities are built on good commercial sites and have no walls; but every important city, especially near the seacoast, is defended by forts guarding the approaches by land or water. A fort is built with walls strong enough to withstand the heaviest shot; it has powerful guns of long range; its approaches are cleared of everything that might shelter an enemy; it has a deep ditch or moat sometimes full of water all around it. Within are quarters for the men who make up the garrison, magazines filled with ammunition, and stores of provi-

sions. It is said that the great fortress of Gibraltar is always provisioned for twenty years ahead. A fort is taken either by siege or assault. In the former case the besieging army is drawn up on all sides so as to prevent the garrison from escaping or getting outside help. Then the besiegers try to get near the fort without exposing themselves to the fire of its guns. The men sometimes advance with gabions,—wicker baskets without bottoms,—set them down and fill them with soil, and so secure a shelter against the enemy's shot. To cross the ditch they sometimes carry bundles of sticks bound together, called fascines, and throw them in till they form a bridge; but this is not often done in modern war. Sometimes they climb to the parapet on scaling ladders. The artillery try to shatter the walls with their big guns, and mines are dug under the walls for blowing them up.

If a garrison is so weakened that it can hold out no longer, it sends out an officer with a white flag of truce to ask what terms will be given. These terms vary all the way from "unconditional surrender" to "honors of war." In the former case the garrison marches out with colors cased and in silence, surrender their arms, and give themselves up as prisoners of war. When a garrison has still fight enough in it to get the honors of war, it marches out with colors flying and band playing, retains its arms, and marches off unmolested. This is seldom, however, done in modern wars.

The country occupied by contending armies is called the theater of war. When an army is in an enemy's



country, at every halt of much duration, and always at night, a guard is established around the camping place of each regiment. The ground guarded by the sentinels and where they walk back and forth is called a post. The sentinels or guards are instructed to allow no one to approach their post without the countersign, which is a word given out and which no one but the guards and the officers know. Each post is numbered and in case the sentinel wishes to leave his post—has captured a prisoner or is in doubt what to do—he calls out: “Officer of the Guard, Post——!” giving the number of his post. At almost any time of night he is liable to be tested by an officer with some men coming around. This is called the “grand rounds.” There is also a line of sentinels thrown out far in front of the whole army. These are called “pickets,” or if mounted men, they are called “videttes.” At the least move by the enemy the videttes send back information of it. If the enemy is advancing, they fire their muskets and, if it looks dangerous, fall back on the main army.

The pickets usually make shallow rifle-pits by throwing up the soil in their front, behind which to build fires for warmth or for cooking, or for defense against the enemy's pickets and sharp-shooters.

When a body of soldiers are marching to attack an enemy, they throw out skirmishers. These are a line of men about twenty feet apart in front of the main force. The skirmishers are for the purpose of guarding against surprises, or an enemy in ambush, and to clear the way for the main body of marching men.

When the battle really begins, the skirmishers fall back to the main body of troops and take their places in the ranks.

To find out what the enemy is doing previous to a battle, scouts or scouting parties are sent out towards the foe; this scouting is done with cavalry mostly, but sometimes with infantry. Where a single scout goes into the enemy's lines to get information, he is called a spy; and if captured he is shot or hanged. Sometimes he is given a court-martial, which is a court composed of officers, the judge of which is called a judge advocate. But usually there is but little form in trying and finding a spy guilty, and an informal trial is called a "drum-head court-martial." All trials in the army are called court-martials.

Soldiers sent out to collect food or forage for the army in an enemy's country are called "foragers." The "wings" of an army are the right and left portions of it. If we draw lines like this:

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to represent two bodies of men, the further ends of each line are its flanks. To attack the flanks of an army is to attack these ends and drive the men into huddles; for it is next to impossible for a line of men to defend itself when so attacked by an enemy. When artillery or musketry sweeps these lines endways down the line, it is very destructive and is called "enfilading" it. In the formation of a regiment there are two lines of men, one back of the other. These are called "rear" and "front" ranks.

Wars grow out of political disputes or for the con-

quest of new territory. These disputes are sometimes settled by diplomacy between the two parties, or by friendly arbitration of a neutral power. When these measures are impossible, the aggrieved nation makes a declaration of war, which is an appeal to arms for the settlement of the dispute, just as in civil life a plaintiff appeals to the courts for a decision of his case.

From this point war is carried on like a great terrible game. The two parties are enemies,—invaders and defenders. Both put as many men into the field as they can raise and under their best generals. The invaders try to weaken the enemy by killing, wounding, and taking prisoners as many of his soldiers as possible; by taking his capital and destroying his army or government; by destroying property, burning houses, killing cattle or destroying any other food that may help him, capturing his forts, and crippling his means in every way possible to prevent his continuing the fight. The defenders try to prevent the invasion and protect their people and property. In these operations, of course, innocent and helpless people suffer terribly, and a week of war may sweep away all the property of a generation of hard-working, peaceable people.

As an invading army enters a country, it tries to take all the forts in its path, for it is bad policy to leave an enemy in the rear. If the fighting is on open territory, the one that can keep the field is the victor. Success in war depends most largely on good generalship. A general is not supposed to risk his life, except at critical turns in a battle, but to take a position where

he can view the entire field and direct the movements of his forces. Great generals are very rare, and that is the reason we give so much study to their lives.

When either side in a war becomes too weakened to carry it on, it asks for terms of peace, and the terms are stated in a treaty of peace which settles all questions in dispute and ends the war.

A civil war is waged between the citizens of the same country. Individuals do not need to fight for a settlement of their disputes, because they can always take them before a court for settlement. But until recently there was no court before which nations could bring their disputes. Now, however, steps are being taken toward forming an international court where national disputes can be settled without an appeal to arms. Even if this should not very soon lead to the disbanding of all armies, it must tend to lessen the number and the horrors of wars. Those who know most about war are most in favor of universal peace.

## CHAPTER IV

### SHERIDAN AT THE OPENING OF THE CIVIL WAR

BEFORE proceeding with our narrative it is needful that the reader should understand some of the causes of the War for the Union.

While Philip Sheridan was getting his training as a careful business man at his old home, his military education at West Point, and his practical experience fighting Indians on the frontiers, the great war in which he was to bear such a brilliant part was gathering over the land. From the very founding of the Union statesmen had differed as to whether a state might go out of that Union of her own accord; and for more than a generation slavery had caused a bitter and burning quarrel between the Northern and Southern members of the Union. When the Republican party was formed, the chief plank in its platform was that all new states should come in, in future, as free. The slave states resisted this on the ground that the free states would soon have such a majority in Congress that they could abolish slavery. When, therefore, the Republican party elected Mr. Lincoln, the slave states declared that as sovereign states they would leave the Union, and they began to seize the forts and other Federal property within their limits. When the loyal garrison of Fort Sumter refused to



surrender, the Secessionists opened fire upon it. By those who denied the sovereignty of the states these acts of rebellion against the rightful government were to be put down by force of arms. And so this great country was swept into a terrible war in which every citizen had to take his stand for or against the preservation of the Union, and thousands sealed their belief with their lives.

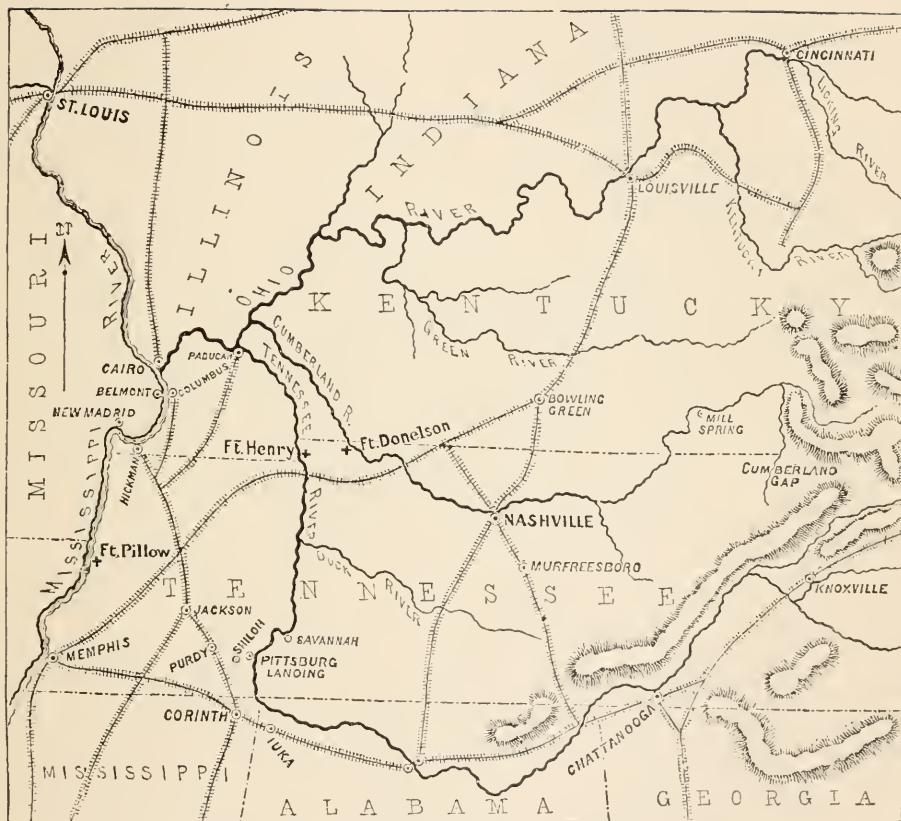
After the first confused fighting in the border states, the war settled down to a grim siege of the Southern Confederacy, but a siege on the biggest scale known to history. A blockading squadron hemmed in the coast from Hampton, Virginia, to Galveston, Texas. The Army of the Potomac guarded the line of that river, while the Army of the West coöperated along the line of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. For four years these armies, with their hundreds of thousands of soldiers, besieged and assaulted the Confederate lines of defense and met with a skill and valor equal to their own, both sides fighting as only men of the same blood can fight each other, till the Confederate Army, worn down to the last shred of its strength, laid down its arms at Appomattox. When the war was over, Philip Sheridan was acclaimed as one of its three greatest generals.

When Sheridan arrived East from Oregon to join the Union forces, he was first assigned to the Army of the West, where General Halleck was in command and General Grant and General Sherman were engaged. At the time of his arrival on the Atlantic Coast Captain Sheridan was about thirty years of age;

he was healthy, insensible to fatigue, and his habits were methodical and painstaking. In person he was under-sized, with a large chest, short legs slightly bowed as though designed by nature to fit the flanks of a horse while riding, and arms so long that they reached below his knees. It was these long arms that made him one of the best cavalry swordsmen in the army. Because of his long body he looked to be very tall when on horseback. His head was large, his face grave and full of strength. His manner was dignified and decided, and ordinarily there was nothing impatient in it. He was willing to do any amount of exact and careful work. No labor was too great or exertion too severe for him to undertake.

General Halleck at first made him president of a board of officers to audit the accounts of the distributing officers in his department, which under Halleck's predecessor, General John C. Fremont, had been loosely conducted. There he soon brought order out of the chaos that had prevailed.

He continued in this work until December 26, 1861, when he was made chief quartermaster and commissary of subsistence of the Army of Southwest Missouri. A difference between Sheridan and an assistant-quartermaster who wanted his place resulted in General Curtis's appointing this man to succeed him. Sheridan had found out that this officer was stealing horses from the surrounding people and then selling them to the army. When he had presented his bill for payment for these horses, Sheridan seized them and refused to make payment even on the order of General



FIELD OF OPERATIONS OF ARMY OF THE WEST.

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Curtis. A court-martial was convened to try him for disobedience, when General Halleck ordered him on duty with a roving commission to purchase horses for his army. He was on this duty when the battle of Shiloh was fought.

Sheridan was desirous of service in the field, but the nearest he could get to it was the appointment as quartermaster of General Halleck's headquarters; this was at the time when Halleck was digging his way to Corinth, or fortifying every part of the way while advancing to capture that place. That general was delighted with the improvement that at once took place in the camp outfit and transportation, under Sheridan's careful and energetic administration. He came near, however, losing this place by his sense of army proprieties. Everybody at headquarters had come to look to him for their comfort, and when an order came for him to obtain fresh beef, Sheridan refused, as he was neither a commissary nor a caterer. The next day, however, he was made a commissary of subsistence, which as he said, "brought him in the line of fresh beef," and after that there was no scarcity of it at Halleck's mess.

Such duties were carefully performed, but he was longing to be let loose into the sterner duties of active life in the field, where he felt that he was needed. General Sherman, with whom he was acquainted, endeavored to have him commissioned as colonel of an Ohio regiment, but failed; for politicians wanted the place filled with their friends for their own benefit rather than for the advantage of the national cause.



He was chafing in these subordinate inferior positions and had almost given up trying to obtain a higher commission for active service, when General Gordon Granger suggested his appointment to the command of the Second Michigan Cavalry.

General Granger was discussing the affairs of that regiment of which he had been the former colonel with Captain Russell A. Alger, afterwards governor of Michigan, when he said, "I have in mind the very man you need to command the regiment."

"Who is it?" inquired Alger. "The regiment is getting disorderly and it needs a firm, practical soldier."

"Captain Philip Sheridan," replied General Granger; "he's the man you need; but I doubt if Governor Blair will appoint him, for he thinks that regular officers are too strict."

"We need that kind of a man," said Alger, decidedly.

"Well, I will give you a letter to the governor; you know he is here, don't you? If you hurry up I think you can see him before he leaves for home."

Alger started at once, saw Governor Blair, obtained the commission for Sheridan, and on the morning of May 27, 1862, handed to Captain Sheridan this telegram: "Captain Philip H. Sheridan, U. S. Army, is hereby appointed Colonel of the Second Michigan Cavalry to rank from this date. Captain Sheridan will immediately assume command of the regiment."

With this telegram Sheridan went to Halleck and said, "I want you to allow me to accept that commis-

sion; it will put me into active service, where I am needed."

At first the crusty old general said, "No, I can't do it without permission of the War Department." But Sheridan urged his desire for active service with such eloquence that Halleck yielded.

When this appointment was known among his friends at headquarters they hastened to congratulate him.

"We are hoping you will soon be a brigadier-general," said one.

"No I thank you," Sheridan is said to have responded. "Colonel of cavalry is rank enough for me; it's just what I want."

How little a man knows himself. Before many months had passed he was a brigadier and then a major-general,—each rank dating, as we shall see, from a battle he had won.

When Sheridan appeared at the headquarters of the Second Michigan to take command, neither officers nor men were greatly impressed. He was so small that they could scarcely see him from one end of the regiment to the other. Once on horseback, however, he looked like a different man, and his horsemanship commanded their admiration. He at once went to work to put the regiment in shape; he saw to it that they were well fed and cared for,—things that only an experienced soldier knows how to do.

At the time of which we write Halleck's vast army had dug its way to the front of Corinth, and the Confederates under Beauregard were trying to escape with

all their material. In two days after Sheridan had assumed command, his regiment and the Second Iowa Cavalry, formed into a brigade under command of Colonel W. A. Elliot, started out for a raid to Booneville, twenty-two miles below Corinth, to destroy the enemy's supplies and to cut his railroad communications, on which he depended in his retreat. They encountered the enemy on the outskirts of the town, forced him back, took possession of the station, and began destroying the railroad track to prevent its use in carrying away munitions of war. The enemy attempted to prevent this by making a dash upon them, but was repulsed by one of Sheridan's companies.

Returning to Booneville, Sheridan found the railroad track blocked with the Confederate supply trains, while several thousand convalescent and demoralized Confederate soldiers were in the fields and woods. He set fire to the cars, which contained over twenty thousand stands of small arms, a large amount of ammunition, several pieces of artillery, and General Polk's personal baggage. All this was done with but small loss of men.

No men recognize more quickly than soldiers in the ranks when an officer cares for their comfort and saves them from needless hardship and loss of life. Sheridan had thus soon gained their respect and admiration, and they were willing to do all that he exacted from them. And the men had already given him the loving nickname of "Little Phil," a sobriquet he always retained with them.

Meanwhile, Colonel Elliot had been commissioned

as a brigadier-general and assigned to duty on the staff of General Halleck, which left Sheridan in command of the brigade. He at once began scouting over the country, making information maps of it and thoroughly informing himself about the people. On the 1st of July we find him encamped at Booneville. Halleck's slow advance on Corinth left Sheridan's command of less than eight hundred men isolated twenty miles in advance, with the Confederate army of Beauregard about the same distance in his front. He had become not only the eyes but the right arm of Halleck's army. He watched every movement, sending Halleck information, and harassed the Confederate outposts. Beauregard was not long in finding out how small was the force that was causing him so much trouble and uneasiness, and resolved to destroy or capture it, for Sheridan was holding a country rich in supplies that he needed for his army.

On July 1, 1862, with about five thousand cavalry under General Chalmers, he came upon Sheridan's pickets about three miles from Booneville, forcing them slowly back until they arrived at the junction of converging roads, where they made a stand, while Sheridan sent three more companies to their assistance. These men dismounted and formed their lines, but soon found themselves confronted by a vastly superior force which overlapped him by deploying two regiments on his right and left. He sent back word to General Asboth commanding the division, "The enemy has ten regiments under Chalmers; I want support, particularly artillery." The supports did not come but,

nothing daunted, he met the emergency energetically and fearlessly. He instructed his men to hold their position until he could bring up supports, and if they must fall back to do so slowly, taking shelter behind every tree or log to assail the Confederates.

At first the enemy attempted to drive them by a direct attack, over an open field. His men waited until the enemy were within short range, and then opened a destructive fire from their Colt's rifles and drove them back. When Sheridan saw that they were overlapping both flanks of his little force, he fell back to a strong position he had selected, in which to give battle. He made his dispositions with great foresight, and was all along his lines, cheering and encouraging and urging his men to do their utmost. When Sheridan was falling back to this new position the Confederates, thinking that they had him on the run, hurled upon him all the men possible. But they soon discovered their mistake, for they were met with a resistance so desperate that it assumed the character of a hand-to-hand fight. His men clubbed their muskets, striking at the enemy and holding him off until reinforcements from the Second Iowa arrived, when the rebels were driven back again. The fight had lasted from daylight until afternoon.

The enemy saw that they outnumbered Sheridan's little army and, gaining confidence with this knowledge began a flanking movement around his left. Sheridan saw that the situation was desperate and that something must be done or the Confederates would capture his camp with his train of supplies. He had sent back



word again: "I have been holding a large force of the enemy prisoners—say ten regiments in all—all day. Am considerably cut up, but am holding my camp."

In this emergency Sheridan determined to pass a small force around the Confederates and strike their rear with a cavalry charge. It was "piecing out the lion's skin with the fox's tail,"—a very desperate remedy for a desperate situation, a last resort, a forlorn hope. He remembered an unused cart-path by which he could send this force to the enemy's rear unperceived. In his brief stay in this locality he had learned every foot of territory, so that he knew the ground better than did the rebels themselves. He carried in his mind every by-path and knew the people and their politics. He thus had every possible resource except men.

Sending for Captain Russell A. Alger, who was just recovering from camp fever, he said: "I am going to entrust to you the execution of a desperate scheme." He pointed out to him, on a map that he had made, the unused road, and said: "I am placing under your command four saber companies, two from each of my regiments. This cart-path will lead you around to the enemy's rear, it leads you to the Blackland road, about three miles from here. I give you just an hour in which to reach this place. When you reach it, turn up that road and charge upon the enemy at once! Yell, hurrah, make all the noise you can! You are not to deploy your men under any circumstance. Charge in column through everything in your front! At the expiration of the hour I will take my reserve,

join the main line and charge the rebels with my whole force. If I am not mistaken that will rattle Johnny Reb. To make sure that you take the right road, I will send with you Breen, my guide, who knows the road. Now remember, when you charge cheer like mad, so that we can hear you."

To the brave man there are often given unexpected circumstances that assist him. Some time after Alger had started out on his desperate venture, a train with two cars came into the station and whistled. Sheridan ordered the engineer to continue rattling back and forth with those two lone baggage-cars, whistling as though trains were arriving with reinforcements. His men actually believed reinforcements were coming to their help and were ready to fight with renewed energy.

When the hour had passed, nothing had been heard from Alger. He had, however, followed his instructions. He swooped down on the Confederates like a whirlwind, in columns of four, reaching their rear at a point not dreamed of by them, dispersing their headquarters without stopping to take prisoners, and rushed on with tumultuous cheers. At the same time Sheridan made a furious attack on the Confederate left with the Second Iowa and charged their front with the Second Michigan. Dazed and confused, and thinking they were being attacked by overpowering numbers, the Confederates broke and ran. The victory was Sheridan's.

In this attack Sheridan had but 827 men, and those under Alger numbered but ninety officers and men. The Confederates had two battalions, in all not less



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than five thousand men. Forty of the Confederates, severely wounded, fell into Sheridan's hands.

After the Confederate stampede was fully assured, Sheridan sent back word: "I will not want any infantry supports, as I have whipped the enemy . . . . I have lost some fine officers and men, but have hurt the enemy badly. It would be well to let me have a battery of artillery. I might then be able to follow them up."

The victory against such odds was very gratifying, and that it has not been magnified the General Orders of both Halleck and Rosecrans bear witness. In General Orders No. 81, Rosecrans says: "The general commanding announces to this army that on the 1st inst. Colonel P. H. Sheridan . . . with eleven companies of his own men and eleven of the Second Iowa cavalry was attacked at Booneville by eight regiments of rebel cavalry under General Chalmers, and after an eight hours' fight drove them back, leaving their dead and wounded on the field. The coolness, determination, and fearless gallantry displayed by Colonel Sheridan and the officers and men of his command deserve the thanks and admiration of the army."

General Halleck in his report to the Secretary of War said: "Official report is just received of a brilliant affair of our cavalry near Booneville. Colonel Sheridan with two regiments—827 men—was attacked by . . . . 4700 men, which he defeated and drove back after eight hours' fighting. Our loss, forty-one killed, wounded, and missing. That of the enemy must have been very great. He left sixty-five dead on



the field. I respectfully recommended Colonel Sheridan for gallant conduct in battle."

I have narrated this first battle of our hero, for it gives the keynote of his later successes. It is said that great events cast a shadow before them. This first battle of Sheridan's under exacting and discouraging conditions heralded the advent upon the scenes of the Civil War of a great general. It was here that he first displayed those great qualities that fitted him for command.

On July 30, Brigadier-Generals Rosecrans, C. C. Sullivan, Gordon Granger, W. L. Elliot, and A. Asboth united in sending a letter to General Halleck, saying: "The undersigned respectfully beg that you will obtain promotion for Sheridan. He is worth his weight in gold."

After the little battle which we have described, it was decided that the position held by Sheridan's troops at Booneville was too much exposed; and he was directed to withdraw to Rienzi, Mississippi, where he could guard the roads in front of the army at Corinth and yet be within supporting distance of General Asboth's infantry. This position also gave him better camping ground and better grazing for his horses.

## CHAPTER V

### THE BATTLE OF PERRYVILLE (October, 1862)

AFTER the fall of Corinth Buell began his march to Chattanooga, and Sheridan, whose command had been increased by the addition of the Seventh Kansas Cavalry, was instructed to obtain information as to the movement of the Confederate army under General Bragg. Thus instructed, Sheridan sent out an expedition that drove out the enemy from the town of Ripley and captured a mail-carrier with letters containing the important information that the Confederates were moving on Chattanooga.

Sheridan was now sending out scouting parties in every direction; one day, when about half of his men were absent on this duty, with no warning from his pickets, which were stationed about three miles out, the enemy suddenly dashed into his camp. It was a very hot day, and his men were resting in their tents quite unprepared for battle. Sheridan, hearing the quick *pop, pop, pop* of muskets, rushed out and rallied his men, who came from their tents snatching up their cartridge-boxes and muskets. They fought the enemy, numbering about eight hundred men, with such energy that the latter finally broke and ran in hasty flight. Sheridan, not satisfied with beating them off, pursued them with two battalions of mounted men and a

battery and, finding their main force drawn up for battle, furiously attacked them and drove them in panic from their camps. Their haste was so great that it became ludicrous, the demoralized men throwing away their arms, blankets, and clothing to lighten them for flight. Sheridan had completely turned the tables. A good many prisoners were taken, and when the recall was sounded his men returned loaded down with captured shotguns, hats, haversacks, pistols, blankets, and clothing.

General Granger afterwards reported that "the rare drubbing Sheridan gave them was the most disgraceful rout and scatteration I ever heard of." But though Sheridan had escaped danger and won honors, the picket officer whose neglect had allowed the unwarned advent of the enemy into his camp was court-martialed. No crime in an army is so great as want of vigilance while on guard, for it exposes a whole army to disaster and possible destruction.

During Sheridan's stay at Rienzi a beautiful horse, which he named for that place, was presented to him by a Mr. Campbell. Rienzi was as black as jet except for his feet, of which three were white. He was very large, intelligent, and powerful, and so active that he could walk five miles an hour. This was the horse that Sheridan rode from Winchester to Cedar Creek, and of which Buchanan Read wrote:

"Hurrah! hurrah! for Sheridan  
Hurrah! for horse and man."

Rienzi carried Sheridan in many battles, and though wounded several times he lived until 1878.

The concentration of national troops at Louisville to meet impending movements of the Confederate army soon sent Sheridan to Corinth preparatory to going to Cincinnati. General Marcus Wright had asked Buell for Sheridan, saying, "I need him very much." But Buell finally assigned him to command the Eleventh Division of the Third Army Corps in his army.

At Corinth Sheridan met General Grant, who had been restored to command and partially to favor, General Halleck having departed to Washington as General-in-Chief. Grant knew Sheridan's services from reports and wished to keep him there; but Sheridan declared, with characteristic vehemence, his belief that his greatest field of usefulness was in Kentucky, and Grant reluctantly allowed him to go. It was Grant's suggestion that Sheridan should take to Cincinnati with him the main part of Granger's command, the Pea Ridge Brigade, as well as the regiment of which he was colonel.

From Cincinnati Sheridan was sent back to Louisville to take command of a part of the brigade we have mentioned and such other troops as might be sent to him. He reported at the Galt House to General Nelson, by whom he was heartily received.

"Why don't you wear the shoulder-straps that belong to your rank?" inquired General Nelson.

"I do," replied Sheridan; "I am colonel of the First Michigan Cavalry."

"No," said Nelson, "you are a brigadier-general since the Booneville fight."

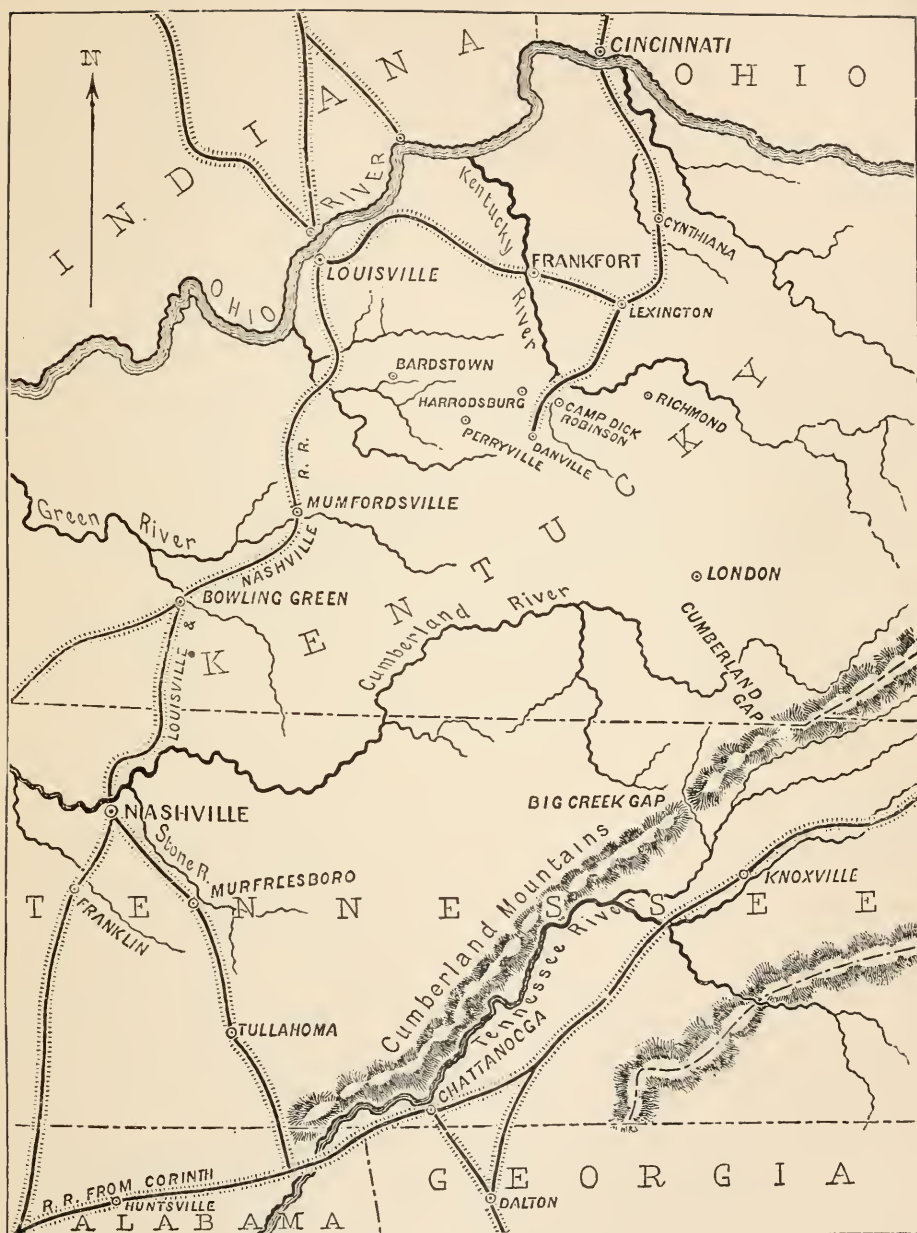
"I have not been notified of it," said Sheridan, "if I am."

The very next day, however, he got official notice of his appointment and thenceforth gladly wore the shoulder-straps of that grade. It was but a few days after that General Nelson, who had a hasty temper, was killed in that very hotel by a fellow-officer, in a paltry quarrel.

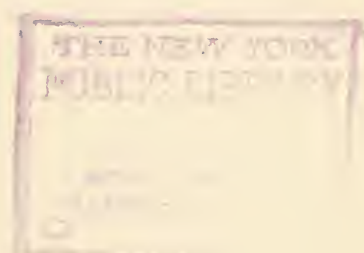
General Buell, as we have said, in reorganizing his forces put Brigadier-General Sheridan in command of the Eleventh Division of his army. Shortly after this Buell ordered the advance of his whole army to destroy Bragg or to drive him from Kentucky.

The army began its move October 1, 1862, and Sheridan's division, forming a part of the Third Corps, commanded by General Gilbert, marched to meet the enemy, who were falling back to Perryville. He found the Confederates under General Hardee, about fifteen thousand men, posted on the opposite side of a branch of the Chaplin River called "Doctor's Creek." At that time there was a drought which had dried up the small streams and springs of that part of the country, and Sheridan was ordered to push beyond this creek, though it was partially dry, as the soldiers were suffering for water. In obedience to this order he crossed the creek, but found that in order to hold the ground it would be necessary to take a range of hills in front of Chaplin River, already occupied by the enemy. Quickly putting two brigades in line, he ordered an advance and carried these





THE THEATER OF WAR IN KENTUCKY AND TENNESSEE.



heights with a rush that took the Confederates by surprise. He at once advanced his whole division and intrenched the heights with rifle-pits. This not only insured him water for his men, but gave him a strong and commanding position which proved of great value in the fight that followed.

Finding that his men while intrenching were annoyed by the enemy's sharp-shooters, he ordered the latter driven back to their main lines. General Gilbert, who was on a hill a mile in the rear, seeing this skirmish, sent word to Sheridan not to bring on a battle. Sheridan signaled back, "I am not bringing on an engagement, but the enemy are apparently determined to do so. I expect an attack soon." Seeing the Confederates forming for battle on the opposite side of the stream, Sheridan recalled all of his men inside of his intrenchments just in time to receive the shock of battle.

While moving along his lines encouraging the soldiers and seeing that they were snugly fixed in their rifle-pits, Sheridan was surprised to see the First Corps under General McCook advancing by a road and apparently wholly unconscious that the Confederates were near. Sheridan tried in vain to inform McCook, by signals, of his danger. Suddenly the enemy dashed upon the unprepared lines, throwing them into great confusion. Though offering a brave resistance until late in the afternoon, the First Corps was too disorganized to do further duty during the battle. Sheridan sent a battery with six regiments to their assistance, but recalled them when he found that

the Confederates were about to assault his own position on the heights.

He had not long to wait. The enemy, with a fierce attack, almost reached his intrenchments. Sheridan passed among his men and encouraged them in his forceful manner to hold on and not to let the enemy take the ridge; and with a heavy fire of canister from his artillery swept the ground over which they were advancing. The enemy, saluted by this destructive fire, staggered back in dismay. Sheridan then brought up his reserve to occupy the intrenchments and with his division, with its flank supported by Mitchell's brigade, hurled the Confederate lines back to Perryville. This occurred about four o'clock and substantially ended the fight, though firing continued until after dark. Sheridan was of the opinion that Buell did not comprehend the magnitude of his victory and should have brought up his idle troops to destroy the enemy.

The significance of Sheridan's part in this battle was his readiness and clear-headed comprehension of the situation in an action that was dictated by sound principles of his profession, and his cool courage and his ability to command men. All this was a forecast of his brilliant later career.

Earlier in the book there was mentioned a quarrel which he had at West Point with a Cadet Tirrell. When Sheridan came to the West he fell in with Tirrell in the Union army. Though a Southerner, Tirrell had remained loyal to his county. Sheridan made the first advance to heal the quarrel, and they

became friends again. Unhappily, however, Tirrell, while commanding a brigade under McCook, was killed in battle while bravely trying to rally his men when they were suddenly and unexpectedly attacked in the manner I have narrated in a preceding paragraph. Sheridan was very sorrowful over his untimely end.

That afternoon the enemy retired from the Union front, and Sheridan followed them on the 9th. Bragg's army disappeared, leaving only a small rear guard, which got away after exchanging shots with a Union battery.

While this was taking place a little daughter of Colonel Landram, whose home was near by, ran out of the house and, amidst the flying shot, fixed a small national flag on the battery. The incident was so full of patriotic devotion, that it appealed to the men and officers of the battery, and through all their later battles they carried this little flag as an inspiration and memento of Perryville.

The blunders of this campaign were attributed to General Buell, and shortly after he was relieved from command and General Rosecrans was given his place. After the battle of Perryville the troops whom General Gilbert had commanded during that battle were transferred to the command of Major-General Alexander McCook, and our little general was placed in command of the Third Division of the Twentieth Army Corps.

The following months were full of activity, leading to the battle of Stone River before Murfreesboro, Tennessee.



It may be said here that though he never paraded his feelings, Sheridan had a profound reverence for religion. Brought up in the Roman Catholic Church, he was yet open-minded to what was beautiful in any other faith. As a cadet at West Point he faithfully attended chapel services and there memorized many portions of the Episcopal Prayer Book. The prayer beginning "O God, who art the author of peace and lover of concord," he thought especially beautiful. To a member of President Garfield's Cabinet he once said, "This prayer was on my lips when I was going into battle at Cedar Creek."

It is a curious fact, by the way, that none of the three greatest soldiers of the Civil War,—Grant, Sherman, or Sheridan,—was a lover of war.

Sheridan's brilliancy on the battle-field has led people to overlook some of his soberer qualities, and even to think of him as rash and profane. He would dash ahead into a storm of shot and shell, shouting to his men in the most passionate terms to follow him. He would, also, order his band to play some of the familiar ragtime music of that day when a battle was on. But the dash ahead was not bravado any more than the impassioned language was profanity or the ragtime music flippancy. They were all well calculated to help his men to win the victory. The music took their minds somewhat off the peril before them, his passionate language stirred their spirits, and his fearless dash gave them courage to follow.

Between battles this brilliant leader could plod with the soberest. He studied the country over which his

army must march or fight like a student at his lessons, acquainting himself in the most painstaking way with every hill, valley, stream, and road. He looked after the equipment and subsistence of his men as carefully as the solidest merchant looks after his business. He was one of those rare generals who could not only lead an army gallantly in battle, but could manage the less showy but not less necessary details that make and keep an army efficient.

His temperament was a curious combination of coolness and ardor, and in the excitement of conflict he thought only of how he was to achieve a victory. He was patriotic to the core and loved his country with all the ardor of his great Irish heart. Her cause was more to him than life or ease. He was honest and faithful and conscientious in all his work, and did nothing in a perfunctory manner. As young Colonel Lowell said in one of his letters to his wife, "If he is not successful he deserves to be, for he works early and late."

## CHAPTER VI

### THE BATTLE OF STONE RIVER (January, 1863)

THE retreat of the Confederates under General Bragg had transferred the theater of war to Tennessee, and Buell had concentrated his army at Bowling Green preparatory to a march to Nashville. Sheridan reached this place with his little division much reduced by battle and sickness. Here Buell was relieved from command, and General W. S. Rosecrans was appointed to take his place. Henceforth the army was to be known as "The Army of the Cumberland."

Bragg was south of the Cumberland River threatening Nashville. General Rosecrans concentrated the army around that city, where he could easily defeat the Confederates' threatening movements. Here Rosecrans began making preparations for a winter battle, which was something that the Confederates did not expect. They hardly realized it until the battle of Stone River was forced upon them.

Sheridan went into camp just outside of the city at Edgefield, and made ready for the campaign about to begin. In this preparation no pains were too great for him to take, no information too minute for him to disregard. He began to drill his soldiers not only in common military maneuvers, but in scouting, foraging, picket and guard duty, changing the location of

the different brigades so as to make them all familiar with the country. In his foraging expeditions the men were required to carry only their blankets, that they might learn to shift for themselves with but little equipment. He familiarized himself with the country and the people.

One day there came to his quarters a small, shrewd-looking man.

"What," inquired Sheridan, "do you want here?"

"Well, General, I thought that you might want me; I am acquainted all over this country."

Sheridan was observant of the man and concluded almost at once that he did want him, or at least all the information that he could get from him.

"What has been your business," asked Sheridan, "and what is your name?"

"My name is James Card, and I have sold religious books over all the country. I am acquainted with the folks,—have preached to them and sometimes doctored them, as well as sold them tracts and books."

"You are just the man I want!" exclaimed Sheridan. For he had made up his mind from the man's face and his answers that he was honest and loyal. And then he began asking him questions about the country. It did not take him long to find out that Card knew every ford and stream and road, and the people, their politics and their opinions—whether they were Loyalists or Confederates. The man was invaluable to him in studying the topography of Middle Tennessee, which he knew was to be the scene of future battles in which he would be called upon to

fight. It was in this painstaking manner that Sheridan prepared himself for future marches and battles.

My young readers will see by this that Sheridan did not only *fight* battles, he made ready beforehand to insure victory. The general who knows the country where he is campaigning, its hills, fords, and roads, is prepared to win victories; and this thorough preparation was one of the secrets of Sheridan's success as a general. In addition to this, however, he had a remarkable memory for the topography of a country that he had once examined. He seemed to carry in his mind a map of all its peculiarities, even when studied from maps. He knew his maps, had minute information as to roads and streams and how they could be crossed, knew the kind of people he would encounter and much more that was useful in his campaigns, and thus his battles were partly won before they were fought. Success in war or peace does not come to fools or blunderers, but to the disciplined and well trained.

Sheridan was fortunate in having for brigade commanders men who were patriots as well as soldiers. One of these, General Sill, was a former classmate of Sheridan's at West Point; another was Colonel Frederick Schaefer, who had been a non-commissioned officer in the German army; also Colonel Roberts, an ideal soldier, as brave as he was young and handsome. These officers, who commanded brigades of four regiments each in Sheridan's division, were inspired with their leader's spirit of discipline and his own dauntless courage. All, officers as well as men, spared no efforts



in preparing for the impending battle, signs of which began to multiply. By skirmishes and reconnoitering parties each army was trying to gain information of the position and intentions of the other.

On the 25th of December, 1862, orders came to the Army of the Cumberland to move forward on Murfreesboro, where the enemy was making preparations to go into winter quarters. It was hoped that in order to hold the place Bragg would accept battle here. By different routes the Union army, the day before Christmas, began its march in a pouring rain. As Sheridan neared the Confederate position, General Davis informed him that the enemy was in considerable force on a range of hills in his front, and asked his support in an attack that he was about to make. The attack was made, the hills captured, and the advance continued.

On the morning of the 30th Sheridan's division was within three miles of Murfreesboro. With two regiments he drove the pickets of the enemy back and after rather serious fighting, secured such a position as it was desirable each division should occupy in the battle about to be fought. This was only after a stubborn dispute with the Confederates, in which the *pop, pop, pop* of muskets and the *whiz* and sputter of shell and solid shot from cannon did the talking. When, at almost sundown, he gained the desired ground, Sill's brigade was in some timber, while Roberts' brigade rested on the Wilkinson Pike and Schaefer's brigade on some high ground in the rear.

At the time of the arrival of the Union army be-

fore Murfreesboro, the Confederates had not dreamed that Rosecrans would attack the place before spring. General John H. Morgan, the noted raider, was being married in the city, and there were present at the ceremony President Jefferson Davis and many officers of high rank in the army. It was said that the floor was carpeted with an American flag on which the assembled party danced to show that they defied its authority. This party was interrupted by the arrival of Rosecrans.

Rosecrans, calling his principal commanders together in the evening at his headquarters on the Nashville pike, gave them their orders. His three army corps were commanded by Generals Crittenden, Thomas, and McCook. The plan of the Union commander was bold, simple, and brilliant. It was, in brief, to attack the Confederate right and drive it towards Murfreesboro. When this was done Crittenden's corps was to attack the Confederates in the rear. McCook, in whose corps was Sheridan's division, occupied the right of the line; Thomas, the center; and Crittenden, the left.

The enemy, under General Braxton Bragg, was between the Union army and Stone River. In Sheridan's front the Confederates were to be seen in strong force, occupying a thick cedar wood which extended the whole length of an open valley.

Anxious for the outcome of the battle, Sheridan several times examined his lines from one end to the other, not only for the purpose of correcting any defect that might exist, but to encourage his men by his

presence and to show them he was thoroughly awake to his duties. Then, with the coming of night, kindling a little fire for warmth, he lay down behind a fallen tree which partly protected him from the cold December winds. During the night Sill, who commanded one of the brigades, awakened him to report that the Confederates were moving to the right with the apparent purpose of making an attack on our lines early in the morning. Sheridan thought that General McCook, in command of the corps, should know this, and so they both went to see him.

"What is the matter?" inquired McCook as they roused him from his slumbers.

"The rebs are moving men to the right, and, if I am not greatly mistaken, intend to make a heavy attack on Johnson's division in the morning."

"Oh," said McCook, "I guess Johnson can take care of himself."

"Well, General," said Sheridan, "if I was in your place I'd strengthen the line; but it is not my place to give advice, and of course you know best."

But the general did not seem to think there was any necessity for making changes, and so Sheridan and Sill returned to their own lines. They moved two regiments within helping distance of Sill's brigade, as a preparation for what they believed to be an impending attack, and then Sheridan returned to his little fire behind the fallen tree.

Long before daylight Sheridan had his men eat their breakfast, and got his infantry in line and his cannoneers standing in readiness at their guns in

anticipation of an early attack. Everything, meanwhile, was as still as death in the cedars where the enemy lay.

But he had not long to wait. Just before day was breaking, the Confederates, as he had anticipated, made a terrible attack on the right of the Union line. Johnson's division was driven back and torn into shreds by the furious assaults. At the same time they assaulted Sheridan's front. He had two batteries so placed that they had an oblique fire on the advancing foe, and, as the Confederates came on, the guns tore their ranks with shot and canister with terrible effect. Still, on they came, until within fifty yards of some timber where Sheridan's infantry lay, when with deadly aim and with repeated volleys they were mowed down. For a short time they bore this destructive fire, and then they broke and ran. The men commanded by General Sill then charged and drove them back into the intrenchments from which they had so confidently come to drive the Union army before them. But, alas! the brave Sill himself fell dead while leading his men in this furious charge.

Although this was a great loss to Sheridan, yet the discomfiture of the Confederates was so great that time was gained in which to recall the brigade to its original position. It also gave him time to place Colonel Greusel of the Thirty-sixth Illinois in command of Sill's brigade.

The enemy advanced again, but this time on Sheridan's right and on Woodruff's brigade of General Davis's division. Sheridan's center lines again drove

the enemy back, but Woodruff gave away, and two of Sheridan's regiments were swept along with him; but these were rallied on the reserve regiments which Sheridan had, as we have elsewhere mentioned, placed there during the night before the battle.

The prospect for the Union army now looked gloomy, and would have ended, no doubt, in its defeat, but for Sheridan's sturdy resistance and thoughtful foresight. Two of the Union divisions, Johnson's and Davis's, were practically out of the fight, for they had lost their formation and were hotly pursued by the Confederates. Sheridan, fearing a fire in reverse from the enemy, ordered Roberts' brigade to charge. This checked them for a time and enabled Sheridan to take up a new position with his two other brigades on some high ground where his batteries had been posted all the morning. Here Davis tried to rally his shattered brigade on his right, but could not. They fell back until they were rallied behind General Thomas's sturdy lines near the Wilkinson Pike.

The Confederate turning movement that was then being executed put Sheridan in danger of being surrounded or enveloped, and under a heavy fire he moved his division once more to the right of another division which had remained undisturbed. Here he posted his batteries on a rocky ridge facing towards Murfreesboro, and then aligned most of his men facing nearly west along the edge of a cedar thicket. The enemy, meanwhile, took possession of the ground from which Sheridan had retreated.

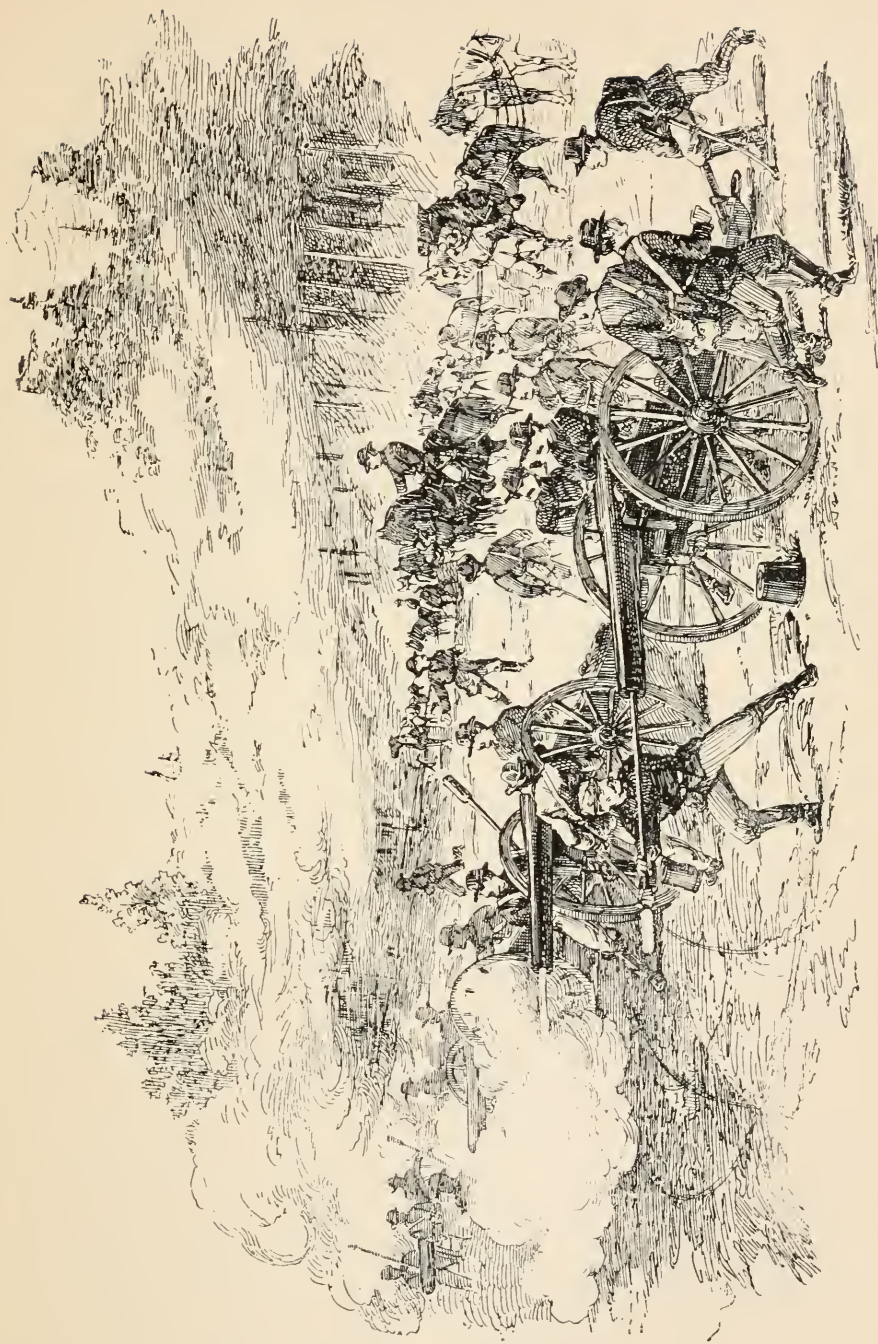
He had hardly got to this new position when, *whew!*



again forward rushed the Confederates under Cheat-  
ham, striking Sheridan's left, while dark masses of  
troops under Hardee, assisted by batteries, attacked at  
the same time his right, and the intrenchments of  
Murfreesboro opened with prodigious clamor their  
artillery fire on his lines. Sheridan's position was a  
good one, and his men, though they lost heavily, be-  
lieving in their young general were confident. The  
contending lines were not over two hundred yards  
apart when the enemy made the assault just men-  
tioned. Sheridan gave the approaching foe shell and  
canister from his artillery and hurled them back. The  
shot from the enemy's artillery struck the rocks in his  
front and bounded and rebounded over them, with  
fatal results to many of his men. But though the  
Confederates had heavily reinforced their lines, Sher-  
idan repulsed them again and again, until at last they  
gave up the combat as hopeless.

While this was going on Sheridan received a mes-  
sage from General Rosecrans directing him to hold  
on where he was, that he might have time to form a  
new line of battle. To his brigade commanders Sher-  
idan said, "We must hold this line, no matter what  
the consequences are; the safety of the whole army  
depends upon us."

As assault after assault tore the ranks, they stood  
immovable as stone or iron. The terrible cry, how-  
ever, ran down the line, "Our ammunition is giving  
out!" "Reserve your fire, then, all you can," was  
Sheridan's command, "and fix your bayonets for a  
charge."



THE BATTLE OF STONE RIVER.



Three assaults, one after the other, were made by the Confederates on Sheridan's depleted lines. Fighting like a wounded lion he drove them back, though not without awful losses, in defeat and confusion. He had on his death roll three brigade commanders,—General Sill, the young and gallant Roberts, and Harrington, who had taken Roberts' place,—besides scores of subordinate officers and men. Though Sheridan exposed himself at the most critical parts of his lines, he seemed to bear a charmed life and escaped unhurt. By his tenacious and brave resistance, he gave Rosecrans time to make a new line of battle. They were precious moments wrung from the clutches of death and disaster.

A lull succeeded the storm of battle, and Sheridan, knowing that his whole force was in danger of being captured, prepared to retire as soon as the Union troops should arrive on his right. When these men had at last taken up that line, two of his brigades were without cartridges to fire a musket. The general grimly ordered them to fix their bayonets for a charge if the enemy should interfere with them, while they slowly fell back to the Nashville Pike.

Eighty horses in one of his batteries had been killed and the battery had to be abandoned, as the ground was too rocky to pull the guns away by hand. His other battery had lost most of its horses, but was saved. One-third of the men of his division were dead or wounded, and soon after he lost his third brigade commander, the brave General Schaefer.

His men, however, were not done with fighting for



that day. The division came out with its ranks unbroken, though thinned by wounds and death. When they had got through the cedars and had reached open ground, Roberts' brigade, commanded by Colonel Bradley, was sent to repel any attempt of the Confederates to interrupt the communications of the Union army. Though they had but two cartridges to each man, they charged and recaptured two pieces of artillery abandoned by the Union troops. Two of his regiments also were supplied with fresh ammunition and sent to aid the right of Palmer's division.

Afterwards withdrawing these regiments to assist another line, Sheridan advanced them through some woods while exposed to a terrific fire, and checked the Confederates. Then, falling back to the edge of the wood, he prepared to repel a charge.

While lying here Rosecrans, with some of his staff, rode up and Sheridan joined him, as he rode out to supervise the formation of the new line and encourage the men by his presence. The Confederates, seeing this party of mounted officers, began throwing shell into the group. One of these shot carried away the head of Colonel Garesche, Rosecrans' Chief-of-Staff, and killed and wounded two or three more of the party.

No other attack of any consequence was made during the afternoon. But the next morning, shortly after daybreak, the Confederates resumed the attack by making a feeble charge on Sheridan's front. The battle, however, was substantially over, and on the night of January 3, 1863, Bragg and his army re-



treated from Murfreesboro, General Rosecrans occupying the town.

This battle and its day of trial had demonstrated Sheridan's ability to command, and had given to his officers and men more confidence in their general. That single engagement had also made them veterans. It had been a fierce struggle, indescribable in words, against great odds; but it was a struggle that made history, and which brought Sheridan far to the front as a commander; for he had been tried by fire and had not been found wanting. The terrible ordeal had not dispirited his men, and after the fall of their brigade commanders they had obeyed Sheridan as if on parade.

While Sheridan exacted faithful service from his officers and men, he was deeply affected by the loss of so many of his brave soldiers. When, after the battle, he reported to General Rosecrans, he said, while tears ran down his face, "This is all there is left of them, General!"

Of Rosecrans' army more than seven thousand were missing at roll call. Sheridan's effective force at the battle of Stone River was 4154 officers and men. Of that number he lost, in killed, wounded, and missing, 1633,—the largest proportional casualties of any battle he ever fought. Rosecrans reported his total loss in killed and wounded to be 8778, while Bragg acknowledged a loss of ten thousand.

## CHAPTER VII

DRILLING AND CAMPAIGNING (January to  
September, 1863)

THAT war is the science of barbarians was admitted even by a general like Napoleon, and there have been numerous unjust and unnecessary wars. But the war for the Union was a war for national existence and was redeemed from barbarism by self-sacrifice and heroic patriotism, by the devotion of thousands of lives that the nation might live. All men, doubtless, have fear of death and wounds, though a man like Sheridan might say, "My anxiety for the results of a battle overcame my fears." It is not cowardly to be frightened on going into battle, but it is a coward who runs away because he is afraid.

In the battle which Sheridan had just fought, most of his men were brave and faithful. A few, however, proved cowardly and deserted their flag in face of danger. Such an act imperiled not only victory but the lives of those who were faithful. Among those of Sheridan's divisions who deserted their colors were four officers. Having fully established the guilt of these men, Sheridan determined to make an example of them. Drawing his soldiers up in a hollow square, with the four deserters in the center, he spoke to the latter as follows: "I will not humiliate any of my

brave men by requiring them to touch your dishonored persons or your swords. They are brave men and shall not be polluted by such contact." He then directed his negro servant to take their swords and cut away their buttons and shoulder-straps. Thus disgraced, they were drummed out of camp to the tune of the "Rogues' March," amid contempt and derision. It was a mortifying but necessary spectacle, and it is almost needless to say that after that no man of that division ever deserted his colors. I have no doubt that such disgrace was worse than death to even these cowardly officers.

Stone River was called by some of the troops "the furnace of affliction." The effects of the victory were encouraging; it strengthened the Emancipation Proclamation of President Lincoln, and inspired confidence in the triumph of the national cause.

After this battle the Army of the Cumberland went into winter quarters at Murfreesboro. Here General Rosecrans received and published a dispatch to his army from President Lincoln, saying: "God bless you and all of you. Please tender to all, and accept for yourself, a nation's gratitude for their skill and endurance." General Halleck, as General-in-Chief, also sent a dispatch, saying: "The field of Murfreesboro is made historical. You have won the gratitude of your country and the admiration of the world. All honor to the Army of the Cumberland." The War Department did not content itself alone with compliments to the Army of the Cumberland and its commander; it sent them all the men available to

recruit their ranks. About fourteen thousand under General Granger were sent from Kentucky.

The battle had been disastrous to the operations of the Confederates in the central South, and to their position in East Tennessee and in the Mississippi Valley, lopping off, as it did, another great section of the Confederacy.

In his report, Rosecrans did justice to the skill and courage of Sheridan, recommending his promotion to the rank of major-general. He received praise on every side for his part in the battle. Even the Confederate rank and file, who fought against him, formed a high estimate of his fighting qualities. Many of them did not like General Bragg, who had a habit of shooting his soldiers for small offenses.

A story is told illustrative of what the Tennesseans thought of Sheridan's fighting. A "reb," worn out with marching and fighting, and quite discouraged, without shoes, hat, or coat, had at last with a black clay pipe in his mouth for consolation, got astride of a lean mule, when General Bragg and a member of his staff met him on the road and the following conversation is reported to have taken place:

"Who are you?" inquired the general.

"Nobody, I reckon," responded the "reb."

"Where did you come from?"

"Nowhere at all."

"Where are you going to?"

"Doggoned if I can tell."

"Where do you belong?"

"Wish you'uns would tell me."

“Don’t you belong to Bragg’s army?”

“Bragg’s army? Bragg? Why, he hain’t got no army,” replied the “reb,” “biggest part of it was chewed up in Kentucky, and the rest, I reckon, was whipped to death by that doggoned little whelp of a Sheridan at Murfreesboro.”

It is said that Bragg rode away without asking any more questions.

The remainder of the winter was passed in drill, parades, foraging, and reconnaissances, and in building fortifications for the defense of Murfreesboro. My young readers may think that a great general has nothing to do while in camp but wear a fine uniform and ride a horse. But a general has great responsibilities; and even when in winter quarters both he and his officers and men are kept constantly busy from morning until night with many duties.

During this season Sheridan sent his scout, Card, with a party of loyal Tennesseans to burn the bridges in the Crow Creek Valley. For many weeks these men did not return. Sheridan, becoming very anxious about them, sent a younger brother of Card’s who had remained in camp to find out where he was. The boy did not return at the time he was expected, but shortly after Card and his party came into camp. They had crossed the Cumberland Mountains to Crow Creek Valley and had been captured by guerrillas and put into prison as Yankee spies. They had escaped from the prison, crossed the Tennessee River, and, after many hardships and with the help of loyal Tennesseans, had at last reached Murfreesboro again.



Card's first question to Sheridan was, "Where is my brother?" Sheridan told him that in his anxiety about him he had sent him to make inquiries. When Card heard this he said, with the deepest emotion: "The boy is dead. The guerrillas have killed him and I am going for them!" In spite of Sheridan's persuasions Card soon after left his service to prosecute his revenge on those who had killed his brother. The next that Sheridan saw of him, he was at the head of some resolute-looking men who were to make it their work to punish the guerrillas, near his home, who he seemed to know had killed his brother. The lines between loyal and rebel Tennesseans were sharply drawn and but little mercy was shown by either side during the war.

During the winter the Confederates constantly interrupted the communication of the army by breaking the railroad with their cavalry and interfering with supplies on the Cumberland River. In order to supply his army with forage, Sheridan sent out scouts to locate grain, followed by a foraging party to collect it. This collection sometimes had to be done under fire from the enemy's skirmishers. Even on expeditions against the Confederates he sometimes took empty wagons to be filled with corn and sent back to Murfreesboro. Illustrative of this was an expedition on the 4th of March.

Colonel Coburn with cavalry had moved to attack Spring Hill, a place thirty miles from Nashville. At Thompson Station he had a fight with the entire rebel force under Van Dorn and Forrest, and his whole

force surrendered. While this was going on Sheridan was out on a ten days' scout, and had taken with him some empty wagons to be filled with corn. He had with him Minty's cavalry, for the purpose of aiding him in a reconnaissance towards Shelbyville. One regiment was ahead of these empty wagons and the rest of his brigade in the rear. The enemy came out, as he had anticipated, thinking to capture easily the wagons and possibly the regiment. But there was where they got into a trap. Sheridan turned his wagons on to a cross road, when *whew!* from behind them came his cavalry followed by his whole division! Thus attacked, the Confederates broke and ran in confusion and were pursued to the very outposts of Shelbyville. Several wagons and fifty Confederates were captured, and Sheridan's wagons, filled with corn almost under the noses of the enemy, were sent safely back to Murfreesboro.

Sheridan then advanced to Spring Hill to make if possible some reprisals for the capture of Coburn and his men. But the Confederates under Van Dorn hastily fell back across Duck Creek, which, being swollen with rain, it was not prudent for him to cross.

In January Sheridan had received his commission as major-general, and he was naturally much gratified by this recognition of his services; though it was only about a year previous to this that he thought a colonel's commission "good enough for him." The brigades of his division were commanded as follows: First Brigade, Brigadier W. H. Lytle; Second Brigade, Colonel Bernard Laiboldt; Third Brigade, Colonel

Luther P. Bradley. Three of Sheridan's batteries of artillery were commanded by Captain Hescok. Four of his companies of cavalry by Colonel L. D. Watkins. In addition to these were twelve companies of mounted infantry.

As spring advanced there was a lull on both sides in the Department of the Cumberland. It was the treacherous calm that precedes a storm.

A great campaign is sometimes more a trial of wits between the opposing commanders, than a trial by battle. This was true of that which followed, known as the Tullahoma campaign. In June the main part of Bragg's force was north of Duck River. Their front was a series of fortified camps, extending as far as Spring Hill and Columbia on the left and as McMinnville on the right. By a feint, or make-believe movement, Rosecrans made Bragg think that he was about to attack his left wing, and then moved most of his army upon the right of the Confederate line. This turned the flank of Bragg's army and compelled him to fall back to Tullahoma. Bragg, seeing that the game was lost, abandoned the place and was soon in full retreat across the Cumberland Mountains. By this maneuver of Rosecrans', he was driven from middle Tennessee in a campaign that took but eight days.

Having briefly outlined this general movement, we will now turn to Sheridan's special part in the campaign. When the forward movement, to maneuver Bragg from his strong position was ordered, McCook's corps, of which Sheridan's division formed a part,

was under arms before sunrise on June 24. Sheridan's division started out in a furious rain, marching over the Shelbyville road until it came in sight of the enemy. Though savagely attacked by the Confederate sharpshooters and artillery, Sheridan obeyed his instructions not to return fire, but halted and bivouacked on both sides of the road. In the morning he marched to the little village of Millersburg, where he encamped for the night, and next day to Hover's Gap, a pass in the hills through which ran the road from Murfreesboro to Tullahoma.

Here let me explain to my readers that Hover's Gap and Liberty Gap were the keys to the Confederate position which, if possessed by the Union troops, would compel the retreat of the Confederate army. It was by passing through these gaps that the Confederate position was flanked, as I have just stated.

After passing through Hover's Gap Sheridan encountered the enemy's cavalry and infantry in small force, and on August 29 he was in front of Tullahoma. Here Rosecrans' whole army was concentrated by the 31st. When the Union army reached the fortifications on the 1st of July, the Confederates were gone, leaving only a small force to cover or protect their retreat. Sheridan took possession of the town, capturing some prisoners and three siege guns.

That same evening orders were given to push on after the fleeing enemy. Sheridan pursued with great energy until he reached the Elk River, which he found so swollen with rains that all hope of crossing was abandoned. Not to be baffled by this, he crossed Rock

Creek and marched up the Elk River to cross the creek at a ford of which Card had told him. After a sharp skirmish with the enemy guarding the ford, he stretched a rope across the creek, which was turbulent and swollen with the rains, so that his men, with their ammunition on their shoulders and heads, could steady themselves while crossing and keep their powder dry. Having at last made the crossing, he marched down the left bank of the Elk River, driving the Confederates from some fortifications and regaining once more the Winchester Road.

The retreat of Bragg's army from Tullahoma virtually ended this campaign, which gave middle Tennessee into the possession of the loyal authorities, again lessening the area of Confederate control. Bragg, after his hasty retreat, concentrated his army at Chattanooga, which is the gateway of the Cumberland Mountains. He knew that the Union army must make an aggressive campaign to get possession of it; while he could stand on the defensive. To attack him there, Rosecrans would be obliged to cross the Cumberland Mountains and the Tennessee River. Bragg *must* hold his position there, as Chattanooga is the key of East Tennessee as well as of Northern Georgia. As will be seen, great efforts were thereafter made by the Confederates to hold this strategic point, even to the reinforcement of Bragg's army by Longstreet's corps from the Army of Northern Virginia and other sources, until it numbered eighty-one thousand men.

Here let me explain that in its general outline the campaigns of the Western armies must not be regarded



as isolated movements or battles. They were definite parts of the great general plan to subdue the rebellion and restore the national government over its own territory. The general movement begun by Grant at Shiloh and closed at Missionary Ridge in 1863 were parts of the plan which preserved Kentucky to the Union, opened the Mississippi River from its source to the Gulf, kept Nashville in the Union possession, opened the Cumberland and Tennessee rivers, and, by capturing and holding Chattanooga, opened the gateway to Georgia through which Sherman marched to Atlanta and the sea.

In the campaign which I have but faintly mirrored, Sheridan's division did its share of hard, toilsome work. Though not the kind of work which exacted the dogged and stubborn qualities required at Perryville and Stone River, it called for clear foresight in dangerous marches, bold tactics, ability to inspire men with patience, courage, and fortitude of a high quality. Sheridan has been thought by those not thoroughly familiar with his wonderful career as a general, to be simply great as a fighter. But he was more than that. His plans for a campaign and his action in great emergencies were governed by a foresight that seemed preternatural. His apparent recklessness at times was based upon carefully calculated plans, which showed him to be not simply a born fighter but a great general.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE BATTLE OF CHICKAMAUGA (September, 1863)

NATIONAL interest was now centered on Rosecrans' army marching to Chattanooga and Grant's army pounding away at the gates of Vicksburg. Grant had expressed fears that if Rosecrans remained inactive, Bragg might reinforce Johnston, who was hovering in his rear, and recruit his army with the purpose of attacking the Union army besieging Vicksburg. Rosecrans, when urged to more activity, had defended himself by declaring that it was against the principles of war to fight two decisive battles at the same time. He further argued that by pushing Bragg's army into Georgia, the Confederates could more easily reinforce Johnston by the use of their interior lines. There are reasons to believe that Sheridan agreed with Rosecrans in these views.

A part of the purpose of Rosecrans in the Tullahoma campaign was the final possession of Chattanooga, which, as we have already said, was important in the further prosecution of the war. Though urged both by General Halleck and President Lincoln to follow up Bragg's army at once after the Tullahoma campaign, Rosecrans wished first to repair the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad, which was important for supplying his army from Nashville. In his further ad-

vance to Chattanooga, Rosecrans had before him a difficult task: He must pass the Tennessee River, the wide plateau of Sand Mountain, and the formidable heights of the Lookout range. He executed this operation with a skill and success that places it among the great strategic movements of the war.

Bridgeport on the Tennessee River was selected as a temporary depot of subsistence for the army, and also as one of the places at which to cross the Tennessee. Sheridan was ordered to take station at Stevenson, Alabama, to protect the railroads that form a junction there, and also to occupy Bridgeport. By the last of August supplies had been accumulated at the latter place, and a forward movement of the army was ordered.

Assisted by the Michigan engineer corps, Sheridan built two bridges across the Tennessee. Pontoons had been sent to him, but there were not boats enough to span the river. The center of these bridges, where the water was swift and deep, he built on pontoon boats; while the ends, where the water was more shallow, were trestled with logs cut in the adjacent woods. The flooring, or a large part of it, was made from the material taken from near-by barns and other buildings. Sheridan's division crossed on these bridges on the 2d and 3d of September, and marched to Valley Head, the point where McCook's corps was ordered to concentrate. Sheridan arrived there on the 10th, climbed Lookout Mountain, encamped on the plateau at Indian Falls, and on the next day marched down the Broomtown valley to Alpine.

Rosecrans had ordered this march under the mistaken impression that the enemy was retreating from Chattanooga. The scattered, disconnected condition of the army gave great uneasiness to Sheridan, and previous to this he had sent a scout recommended to him by Card, inside of Bragg's lines to learn what was going on there, and also to find out if possible what Bragg's intentions were. The scout had no difficulty in getting inside of the enemy's lines; but to get back, with the desired information, was another matter. He was arrested as a Yankee spy and placed under guard. He succeeded in escaping one dark night by crawling beyond the sentinels by imitating the movements and grunts of a hog. He brought back the important information that Bragg intended to fight, and that his army was about to be reinforced by Longstreet's veteran corps from the Army of Northern Virginia.

By this time it had become apparent to Rosecrans and his commanders that the Confederate movement was not a retreat, as at first had been supposed, but concentration, with the intention of striking the Union army while in its scattered condition and before it could concentrate its dissevered parts. When the error upon which the march had been ordered was perceived, the army at once began a retrograde movement with all possible celerity. The part of McCook's corps that had got to the Broomtown valley was ordered to the top of Lookout Mountain. The retrograde movement was difficult and exhausting, it being at times necessary to draw the artillery and baggage wagons

up the steep grades by hand and to let them down by the same process.

Bragg, meanwhile, appears to have had a very clear conception of the situation of the Union army. In his report he says, "Thrown off his guard by our rapid movement, apparently in retreat, when in reality we had concentrated opposite his center, and deceived by deserters and others sent into his lines, the enemy pressed on his columns to intercept us, and thus exposed himself in detail."

The three corps of the Union army were from twelve to fifteen miles apart, and were nearer Bragg's compact force than each other. This offered to the Confederate commander an opportunity seldom presented in war, that of striking an enemy whose parts were scattered while his own forces were united and within striking distance. Bragg failed to avail himself fully of this advantage, and by good fortune, rather than design, Rosecrans escaped the greater peril of this situation.

On the 18th of September the two armies were facing each other on the opposite sides of Chickamauga Creek, whose Indian name is said to signify "The River of Death." The battle began at ten o'clock on the morning of the 19th. That my readers may get a clearer understanding of Sheridan's part in it, let me first outline its general phases.

It was General Bragg's design to crush the Union left and seize the road to Chattanooga. This would not only give him possession of Chattanooga, but would cut off the Union army from its base of sup-



plies and defeat it, for an army can go only so far as it can get food and ammunition. From the mountains Bragg could see the movements of the Union army and therefore had the advantage of knowing where best to strike it. During the campaign Bragg had expressed, however, his dissatisfaction with campaigning in a mountainous country by saying: "Who can tell what is behind that hill? It is like a plastered house full of rat-holes; the rats are likely to pop out anywhere."

Thomas held the left of the Union lines, Crittenden the center, and McCook's corps, to which Sheridan's division belonged, the right.

The Confederates crossed the creek without opposition and attacked the left of the Union army. The battle was fiercely contested. Thomas's lines were forced back by the terrible assault of the Confederates, but stood like a rock, though moved from its base, as solid as ever. On the morning of the 20th the fight was resumed. Bragg's plan was the same as the day before, to crush the left of Rosecrans' army and drive back the center and then, by a wheeling movement, throw the right of his own army across the path to Chattanooga. In carrying out this plan he failed, for a lion stood in his path. Though assailed by overwhelming numbers, Thomas still stubbornly and skillfully held all the essential parts of his line.

The fight might have resulted in a Union victory but for a miswritten and misunderstood order, by which General Wood was made to withdraw from the Union lines at a critical moment. Longstreet, the ablest field

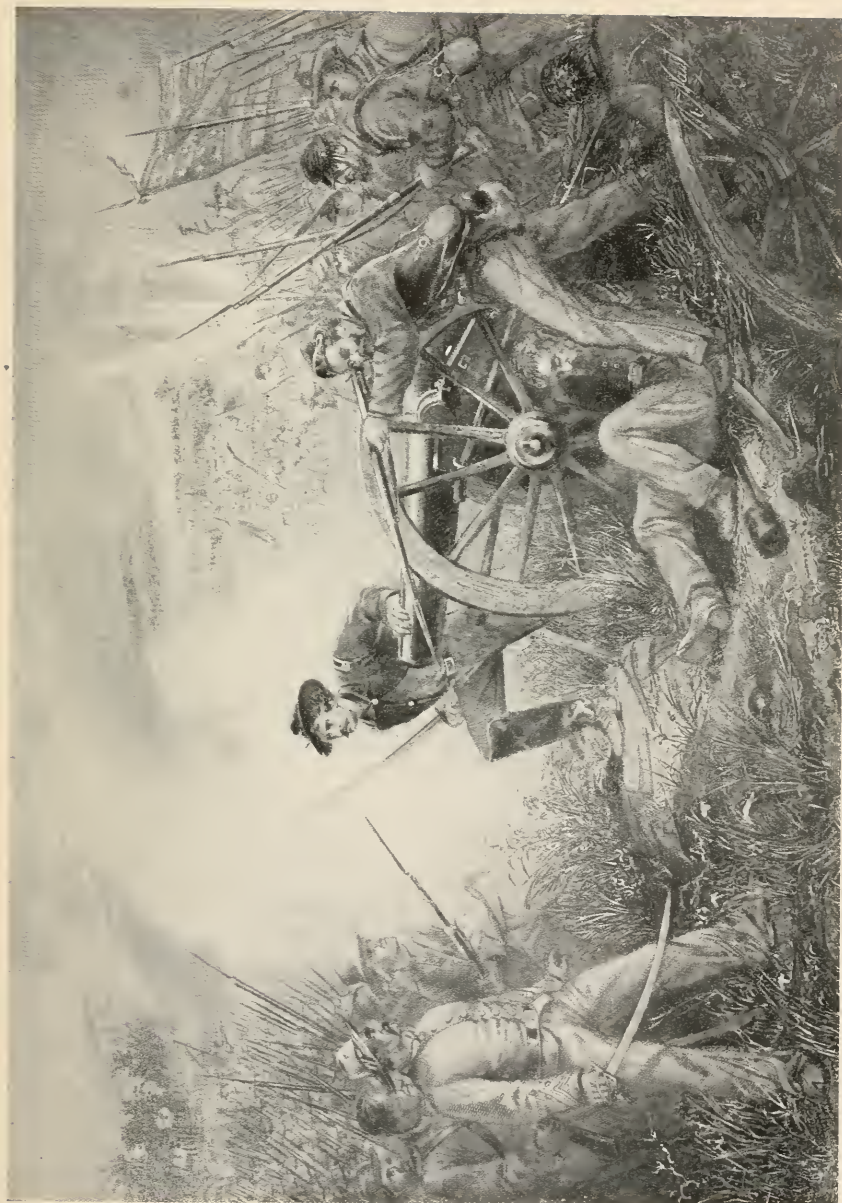
commander of the Confederates, perceiving the gap thus left open, rushed forward his veteran troops to interpose between the severed lines. The Union center was smashed, and it looked as though the whole army was to be destroyed. But about dark the last charge of the Confederates was repelled with a counter charge and the battle was substantially over. Thomas fell back to Rossville, leaving the enemy in possession of the terrible field, and during the following day retired to Chattanooga.

Having briefly outlined the battle, let us turn to Sheridan and portray with more minuteness his part on this terrible field of blood. On the 17th, after the army was virtually concentrated, Sheridan remained in line of battle all day at McLamore's Cove. Here he had some vigorous skirmishing with the enemy, who were demonstrating against him. On the 18th he encamped at Pond Spring, and on the 19th took position in line of battle at Crawford Springs, to protect the right and rear. Here, finding he was in danger of being cut off from the main army, he was directed to hold the ford at Lee and Gordon's Mills on Chickamauga Creek, and this brought him again in close contact with the rest of the army. His march to this place was hindered somewhat by the cavalry skirmishers of the Confederates on the west side of the creek, who annoyed the right flank of his division on its march.

On his arrival he found that the enemy with a small force was about to take possession of the ford, which had been left uncovered. Sheridan's men drove the

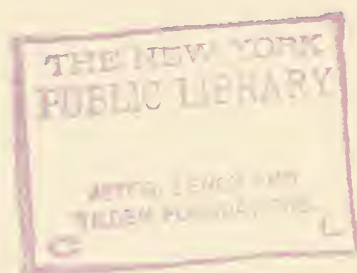
enemy back and recovered the ford. Leaving a brigade to guard it, he marched with Laiboldt's and Bradley's brigades about a mile and a half north, to help Crittenden's corps, whose troops were fighting the enemy. Davis's division had just been defeated and driven back by the enemy along the west banks of the Chickamauga. So savage had been Davis's repulse that one of his batteries of artillery was left behind him when driven back. The contest was still going on when Sheridan, with colors flying and with confident steadiness, charged across an open field, rushed upon the enemy, recovered Davis's batteries, and drove the Confederates back. Laiboldt's brigade had, meanwhile, joined in the fight, and, after an ugly contest and with heavy loss, regained the ground which was Davis's original position before being driven back. Bradley was wounded and his loss was heavy, but when the brigade which he had left at the ford rejoined him, he suggested to General Crittenden that a general attack be made on the Confederate lines. But, as his troops had been fighting all day, that general thought it would not be prudent.

To counteract the attempt of the enemy to turn the Union left, the movement to the left was continued and Sheridan, by skillfully shifting his brigades from right to left in succession, reached a position near the Widow Glen's house. After seeing his division settled down on this new line for the night, he rode to headquarters, where nearly all the general officers of the army were congregated. Here he learned of the failure of the Confederates to drive Thomas from his po-



THE BATTLE OF CHICKAMAUGA.







sition. It looked gloomy for the morrow, for it was learned that Longstreet with his veteran corps from Lee's army had now arrived to assist Bragg, and that at the dawn of another day the Confederates would greatly outnumber the Union army. As they had barely held their own during the day that was past, this naturally caused anxiety and apprehension for the results of the battle of the coming day. The forebodings were intensified by the necessity of moving men to the left in the presence of a foe which was trying to break through the Union lines and wedge a column between the right and left of the moving divisions. This movement, though contrary to military principles, was demanded by the necessity of protecting the left flank of the Union army. Necessity has no rules, and though such a movement is dangerous to an army, it was apparently its only resource of safety.

When morning dawned, a dense fog obscured the contestants from each other. Rosecrans took advantage of this obscurity to re-form the right of the Union army. Sheridan drew back and made a barricade of rails and logs behind which to shelter his division, which was isolated from the force on his left. While he remained here undisturbed for several hours, the interval between him and the main army was widening and he sent one of his brigades to fill the gap. But finding that Davis's division was occupying the position he had been ordered to take, with his usual forethought he formed the brigade on the crest of a low hill to protect Davis's right flank.

It was at this time that he was ordered to the assist-

ance of General Thomas's hard-pressed lines on the extreme left. He moved at a double quick to obey the order. Longstreet's veterans had, however, penetrated the interval left open and disrupted the line into confused masses. One of Sheridan's brigades charged through this mass of men, but all in vain, for when a force is struck on its flank it is driven into huddles and cannot fight. The brigade broke and went to the rear in disorder. As the confused and broken regiments were falling back, Sheridan re-formed his men under a terrific fire, to stem the tide of defeat that was sweeping the Union columns to destruction and defeat. But these steady veterans, who had never broken in battle, now, in their turn, received a deadly fire and their formation was shivered into fragments. Sheridan rode among them entreating and ordering them to reform. Under his stimulating presence and at the voice of their popular commander, his men formed in the face of defeat, attacked the enemy, drove them before them, retook the ridge, and captured the colors of the twenty-fourth Alabama.

But the hill could not be held by this little force, in the face of Longstreet's veterans and overwhelming advantage of numbers and position; and at last it was yielded and the force driven back with lamentable loss of men and officers, among whom was the loved General Lytle, who was killed while leading his brigade. Sheridan reorganized their shattered ranks and once more aligned them in battle order, beyond the Widow Glen house, on some low hills behind a road.

McCook's and Crittenden's corps were defeated;

the whole right wing of the Union army was swept away. General Rosecrans, believing that all was lost, was riding behind Sheridan's lines on his way to Chattanooga, and sent word that he wished to see him; but Sheridan could not at that critical moment leave his division.

Sheridan discovered that the Confederates were endeavoring to cut him off from Chattanooga by driving in between his brigade and the main army. He defeated this attempt by moving back to the southern face of Missionary Ridge, where he was separated from the rest of the army. From here he marched to Rossville, which he reached two hours before sundown, bringing with him a long ammunition train, eight pieces of light artillery, and forty-six caissons, rescued from the wreck of the battle that we have described. On his way to join Thomas,—which he did at 6 o'clock in the evening,—he captured several of the field hospitals of the Confederates, and then reported the presence of his force to General Thomas, and asked for orders. That old hero said but little, as they sat in the corner of a worm fence, but was of the opinion that it would be useless to attack the enemy that night.

Notwithstanding that affairs looked critical for the morrow's fight, Sheridan lay on the bare ground and was soon in a deep sleep, from which he did not awake till daylight. Fortunately, the enemy did not attack in the morning; for they, too, had met with terrible losses and their forces were shattered and much disorganized. This pause in battle gave Thomas, who

was commanding the army in the absence of Rosecrans, an opportunity to get the disorganized forces in order. Rosecrans, McCook, and Crittenden were in Chattanooga, and that fact discouraged those who knew it. This caused the army to move back within our lines at Chattanooga, leaving the bloody field of battle to the Confederates. But though the field was theirs, it proved a barren victory, for the Union army held the prize for which the battle was waged,—Chattanooga.

The losses of both armies had been frightful. The total loss of Rosecrans' army was 16,179, of which loss 1656 were killed and 9749 were wounded. Bragg's official report says he lost forty per cent of his army; which makes his killed and wounded over twenty thousand.

Our hero had acquitted himself with great credit, although he was heard to complain bitterly that he had not got a chance to fight. To almost any one but Sheridan his chance of fighting would have been quite sufficient.

Sheridan was of the opinion that if Thomas had held on and had attacked the enemy the afternoon when he joined him, the Confederates would have abandoned the field. Undoubtedly, if Sheridan had been in command of the forces on the field, he would have done so and possibly have won a victory for the Union.

## CHAPTER IX

### SHERIDAN AT CHATTANOOGA

ON the 22nd of September, 1863, Sheridan, with his division, took position within the strong intrenchments near the iron works, and under the very shadow of Lookout Mountain, at Chattanooga. The "Gate City" is situated on the Tennessee River, which at this point forms a loop not unlike the letter S. On the land formed by the lower part of this S is the city of Chattanooga, while within the upper part is a promontory known as Moccasin Point. On every side is a grand and mighty landscape,—bold, rugged, and picturesque. Standing in the city and looking across the river and Moccasin Point one sees the Raccoon range of mountains; on the left is Lookout Mountain, whose precipitous banks come down to the level near the river, where Sheridan had his encampment, while in the rear is the famed Missionary Ridge.

When the Army of the Cumberland had retreated to Chattanooga, the Confederates had slowly followed and, by taking position at Lookout Mountain and at Missionary Ridge and sending their cavalry under Wheeler north of the Tennessee River, had put the town in a state of siege. As Bridgeport was the base of supplies for the Union army, it could get food and forage only by a circuitous route of sixty miles over



the Cumberland Mountains. This road was difficult, even in good weather, for loaded army wagons, and next to impossible when rains set in.

The army was soon in a desperate condition; the men, on half rations and those of the worst quality, were hungry and dispirited, while the mules and horses were dying by scores. Exposed to a constant artillery fire from Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge, it is not to be wondered at that Rosecrans, a man of genius but not of great persistency, thought it doubtful if he would be able to hold the position.

One of the qualities that endeared Sheridan to his men was that he was constantly looking out for their welfare and comfort. While the men of the other divisions of the army were suffering for food and their horses and mules were starving and dying, Sheridan, with his usual enterprise and sagacity, managed to provide for his division so that men, horses, and mules were all tolerably well fed.

As a magnet attracts particles of iron, so the daring spirit of our hero attracted to him men of similar qualities. A troop of Kentucky cavalry attached itself without authority to his division, and because of the anticipated reorganization of the army had been left undisturbed. Its officers and men were ready for any work that Sheridan might cut out for them to do. Under guidance of the scout Card, Sheridan sent this troop out to obtain supplies for his men. Conducted to the Sequatchie Valley, it hid itself in a secluded spot at the upper part of the valley, and by keeping very quiet and paying for everything they took from the

people, they were able to gather and send to camp supplies of corn for the animals and food for the soldiers; also eggs, ducks, chickens, and turkeys abundantly for his officers' mess. Sheridan was thus often able to contribute to the mess at headquarters as well as to the messes of friends. In this way he brought his men and animals through the siege in fair condition.

Sheridan's headquarters was on the grounds of a man who was a devoted loyalist, and from him he gathered valuable information about the country and the condition of the Confederate army. He learned about the roads and people that he might wish to make use of in the future. His ability for gaining information in this way was itself a kind of genius.

On October 16, 1863, Rosecrans was succeeded in the command of the Army of the Cumberland by General Thomas. By the same order that relieved Rosecrans, General Grant was assigned to the command of a military district which consolidated three departments, including the Department of the Cumberland, to be known as "The Department of the Mississippi." In the reorganization of the army that followed, Sheridan's division was enlarged by additional troops. He now had twenty-four regiments in his command, which was henceforth to be known officially as the Second Division of the Fourth Army Corps,—though he had so stamped his personality upon it that it was almost universally known as "Sheridan's division."

Hooker with two corps had, meanwhile, arrived to reinforce the army, and the prospect began in a meas-

ure to look more encouraging. On the 19th of October Grant arrived at Chattanooga, and a period of activity at once began.

Grant's first task was to open a direct route to Bridgeport, in order to provision the army. To do this he sent General Hazen to seize Brown's Ferry, at the northern base of Moccasin Point, while Hooker crossed the river at Bridgeport, in open day and in plain sight of the Confederates, and took possession of Lookout Valley. This position meant defeat or victory to the Union army and was not to be held without a struggle. To regain possession Bragg planned a night attack, to be executed by Longstreet.

The attack in the dark was sharp and bitter for a while, but it ended, with a touch of comedy, in a Union victory. Hooker's mules, as if in contempt of Bragg's tactics and as though impelled by military ambition, broke away from their frightened drivers and, with a prodigious clanking of chains and rattling of harness, charged into the Confederate lines! The Confederates, thinking a cavalry charge was coming, took back tracks for the rear. Hooker's men were amused by the performance of the mules and celebrated the event in a parody, one of the verses of which runs like this:

“Mules to the right of them,  
Mules to the left of them,  
Mules all behind them  
Pawed, neighed, and thundered;  
Breaking their own confines—  
Breaking through Longstreet's lines,  
Testing chivalric spines,  
Stormed the two hundred.”

The direct route to Bridgeport was established by the 27th of October, and the "Cracker Line," as the men called it, soon gave abundant supplies to the army. The enemy thereafter made no attempt to dispute it. Then followed four weeks of preparation for battle, which would begin as soon as Sherman with the Army of the Tennessee should arrive.

Bragg, meanwhile, as if in league with fate to give Grant victory, detached Longstreet's corps from his command and sent it to capture or destroy Burnside, whose army Longstreet besieged at Knoxville, Tennessee. But Burnside, though a hundred miles from a railroad or his base of supplies, and though his men were suffering for food and his animals starving, yet courageously held the town. Grant was urged to help him, but believed the best way to do so was first to win a victory at Chattanooga. He had raised the siege, but there was still great peril, though Sherman was hastening to his assistance.

By the 18th of November Grant had made his preparations and issued his instructions to his commanders. By his plans Sherman was to cross the Tennessee and capture the northern part of Missionary Ridge as far as the railroad tunnel. The Army of the Cumberland was to coöperate with him while Hooker held Lookout Mountain on the right. On the 24th Sherman had arrived and crossed the Tennessee River as planned.

Grant, ever optimistic, thought that Bragg was trying to get away, and ordered a strong demonstration to be made on his front. A part in this task was as-

signed to Sheridan. Wood's division made a reconnaissance to an elevation called Orchard Knob, and Sheridan supported or assisted him.

On the morning of the 23d Wood's and Sheridan's divisions were formed in line, and at two o'clock, at the booming of signal guns, moved out, drove back the rebel pickets, took possession of Orchard Knob and, on a low ridge on its right, threw up a line of rifle-pits and under instructions from General Thomas mounted two pieces of artillery there. Here, subject to some inconvenience by shell from the enemy, they remained until the 25th. The result of the whole movement of Grant's army that day was to secure a line a mile in advance of the one he had occupied the day before.

On the 24th Sherman attacked the enemy, to capture the north end of Missionary Ridge; and, though he failed in part in this attempt, it led Bragg to weaken his lines on Missionary Ridge, thus making it easier, in the fighting that followed, to capture that position. Hooker, taking advantage of it also, advanced up the north part of Lookout Mountain and, by a picturesque battle, planted the stars and stripes on its crest. "The Battle above the Clouds," as it is called, was a sharp conflict, which gave Hooker a position that he pronounced impregnable.

By the 25th, Grant's army practically formed a continuous line, with the Army of the Cumberland in the center, connecting on the right and left with Sherman and Hooker; while Bragg's entire army was holding the line of Missionary Ridge. In the morning Sher-



man attempted to gain the high ground near the railroad tunnel and heavy fighting took place. Sherman did not succeed as well as he anticipated, but the fighting served to distract Bragg's attention from other parts of the line. Meanwhile Hooker crossed Chattanooga Valley for the purpose of crossing Missionary Ridge near Rossville.

Early in the day Sheridan was all alive with action. His division had been brought into a high condition of efficiency by constant drill and careful attention to the wants of his men, and was like a keenly tempered and sharpened blade ready to be wielded by one that was its master. His men had confidence in their general, knowing that he would not lead them into dangers that he was not himself ready to face; that he understood the business of war; that in peril, while exacting much from them, he would be thoughtful of their needs, and that there would be no blundering or throwing away of their lives without compensation. Such generals can exact the uttermost from those they command. They advanced, first driving in the Confederate pickets in their front so as to unite the line of battle with that of Wood's Division; and then they awaited orders to carry the first line of intrenchments before them at the foot of Missionary Ridge. While they pause, let us look for a moment at the task before them. The enemy had retired from Lookout Mountain during the previous night, burning the bridges and otherwise destroying the roads on which Hooker was to move. They had concentrated their forces for the impending final battle, that was to bring victory or

defeat. Grant had given orders for the Army of the Cumberland to move to the attack when they should hear the signal guns. His orders were, "As soon as the signal is given, the whole line will advance and you will take what is before you." This order contemplated the capture of the first line of intrenchments at the foot of the ridge, and then a halt to rest and re-form their ranks.

It was five hundred yards from the foot of the ridge to the summit and the way was broken by gullies, fallen timber, and loose stones rolled from the crest; while from jutting rocks field artillery and riflemen swept the sides with destructive enfilading fire. On the very top of this ridge was a line of strong intrenchments, well manned with riflemen and cannoneers. Bragg afterwards declared that their position there was so strong that a single line of skirmishers should have been able to defend it. Such was the position that we are about to see Sheridan attack.

Sheridan was waiting for the signal, with his whole front covered by a heavy line of skirmishers. His left joined Wood's division, and his center faced Bragg's headquarters on the heights above. Before him was an open plain from four to eight hundred yards to the foot of the Ridge. Bragg from the heights above perceived that an attack was about to be made, and as Sheridan saw him moving his men to fill up the gaps and strengthen his line, he became impatient for the signal. He knew that the longer the attack was delayed the more difficult it became to carry their works; and already, with his keen military sense, he began to

doubt if it was best to pause at the first line of rifle-pits at the foot of the ridge when he had captured them. While anxiously waiting for the signal, he sent one of his staff to General Granger to inquire if they were to carry the ridge beyond when they had captured the first line of intrenchments at the foot of the heights. It was then four o'clock.

Before the return of the messenger, six guns boomed out on the still air. It was the signal for attack. Turning to his brigade commanders, Sheridan in his most impressive manner said, "Go for the Ridge!" Then, riding forward, he placed himself in front of his battle line. The whole line rushed forward upon the enemy's intrenchments, with Sheridan at their head. Shell sputtered, bullets hissed, and solid shot plowed their ranks as, with flying colors, in magnificent array the line swept forward, leaving behind them a trail of dead and wounded.

They reached the first line of intrenchments, and the Confederates, after a short resistance, threw themselves in dismay on their faces and the whole line of Sheridan's men rushed over them towards the heights. A thousand prisoners were marched without guards to the rear, and were glad to go, as the intrenchments were then under fire from the crest above.

While Sheridan was still in the intrenchments, he got word from General Granger that they were to carry only the first line. The aide-de-camp bringing the order had already ordered Wagner's brigade back to the intrenchments.

Sheridan felt that this was a mistake; he could not

bear to have his gallant men, who had already begun the ascent, turn back. He was confident that they could take the heights. Riding to the head of Wagner's brigade, he said, "We are going up there, men!" and the advance of five hundred yards to the summit was resumed.

When Grant, who was watching the attack from Orchard Knob, saw Sheridan's men swarming like bees up the steep heights, he asked, "Who ordered those men up the ridge?"

"I don't know," said General Thomas, in his cool tones; "I did not."

"Did you order them up, Granger?"

"No," replied Granger; "but when those fellows get started the devil can't stop them!"

"Ride to Wood and Sheridan," said Grant, "and ask them if they ordered their men up the ridge. Tell them if they can take it, push ahead!"

"I did not order them up," said Sheridan, and then, with a forceful gesture, exclaimed, "But we are going to take that ridge!" It was an excusable lie, for he knew that the ridge could be better taken then than if delayed.

The broken ground made it impossible to advance in regular lines of battle. So they advanced as they could, clinging to the steep sides of the mountain, which was swept by missiles of death. There was a rivalry between the brave men, to see whose colors should be farthest advanced. The strongest and most daring were ahead, with the weakest and timid—if there were any such—in the rear.

Halfway up the heights a second line of intrenchments was to be carried; and meanwhile shot, shell, and bullets dropped around them, mowing paths through their ranks; but these were as little heeded as raindrops. They reached the second line. There was a brief conflict, and then, with a desperate rush, they went over the intrenchments. Then, with a shower of bullets and shot smiting their lines, they pushed on in a final rush to the top of the ridge. They faced the hot fire confidently, for was not Sheridan, their loved commander, among them on his steed and exposed to the same danger as themselves?

Under the fire of deadly sharpshooters the color bearers at the apex of the wedge-shaped masses of men going up the heights fell all along the sides of the mountain. Each regiment drew toward its flag, while the bullets hissed and the cannon swept their ranks. The Confederates lighted the fuses of the shells and rolled them down on to the advancing column. The enemy that had been driven out of the second parallel was so closely pursued to the summit that the retreating Confederates and the Union flags reached there almost at the same time. Then there was a noisy crackle of musketry, punctuated by booming cannon, and the blue line with its glittering crest of bayonets surged like a mighty wave over the crest, with their gallant commander riding at their head. He was the only one on horseback in that charge. Then cheer after cheer rang out, giving assurance of victory to Grant and his staff, anxiously watching at Orchard Knob below.

Sheridan's whole division had reached the crest on



a run. The guns at Bragg's headquarters began firing on their somewhat disordered lines, but were soon captured and turned on the retreating enemy. In the valley on the reverse side of the mountain they could see the disorganized Confederate wagon train moving in hurried retreat, mingled confusedly with pieces of artillery, protected in part by a partially organized line of infantry. But Sheridan was not alone, though he had first reached the crest. At six different points Sheridan's and Wood's divisions had broken over the crest of the ridge. The sun had not gone down when Missionary Ridge was in the hands of the Federals. Baird's men reached the ridge just in time to confront a large body of Confederates moving to attack the Union left.

Mounted on a piece of captured artillery, Sheridan, without stopping for praise or congratulations, began to direct the pursuit of the retreating enemy. He knew that the Confederates were on the run and must be pressed to the utmost to gain the full harvest of the day's work. At a second ridge the Confederates stoutly resisted the pursuit. Sheridan sent two of his regiments to flank the position, and the hill was captured.

The moon had just come up behind the mountain. That Sheridan had something of the poet as well as the hero in his composition is shown in the fact that after the excitement and fatigue of the day, he could stop to note and admire the beautiful picture presented by the rising moon, magnified by refraction, across whose silver disk the figures of his marching men stood

out in almost full relief as against a huge medallion.

He pressed the pursuit, with tireless persistency, until twelve o'clock that night. He knew every stream and road and hill of the country round about, better even than the Confederates themselves, and knew that if he could reach Chattanooga Station with sufficient force he could cut off the Confederate retreat in part and inflict great if not irreparable injury upon the enemy. He was not able to get the needed help, and at twelve o'clock halted his tired men and gave it up. Had he got the support that he called for, he could have struck the retreating Confederates that had been fighting Sherman; for they did not pass the Station until after daylight the next morning.

When Grant visited his bivouac the following day, Sheridan explained what might have been done had he got help. Grant saw that a great opportunity had been lost. His keen military sense appreciated and doubtless marked Sheridan as a future commander whom he could trust and use, for Sheridan was a man after Grant's own heart.

That Sheridan, notwithstanding other claimants, did the better part of the work that brought victory and triumph to the Union standards in the battle of Chattanooga, is shown by the fact that his division lost in those fateful moments 123 officers and 1181 men killed or wounded, which was one-third of all the casualties of the battle, including the losses of Sherman. This plainly shows who did the heavy fighting that decided the conflict. Not only was Sheridan's superiority shown in this, but in his clear perception of what should

be done after the crest was won. Grant says in his "Memoirs": "To Sheridan's prompt movements (after the ridge was captured) the Army of the Cumberland and the nation are indebted for the bulk of the capture of prisoners, artillery, and small arms that day. But for his prompt pursuit, so much in this way would not have been accomplished."

It was one of the most picturesque and brave attacks made during the entire war, as well as the most daring. It is doubtful if it could have been achieved by any other officer commanding in the army. Sheridan's men knew that he was sharing their dangers, and his presence in the front of battle was more inspiring at critical moments than any help or reinforcement they could have received.

## CHAPTER X

### THE RELIEF OF KNOXVILLE

THE loyal people of Tennessee had long been urging President Lincoln to send help to reestablish national authority in that state. He had endeavored to meet their wishes, but conflicting interests did not permit of his doing this at once. The people were intensely loyal, but were unreasonably urgent for that which he had not the immediate power to give.

On August 16, 1863, Burnside with the Ninth Army Corps took possession of Knoxville, Tennessee, without opposition, Bragg having at that time withdrawn his troops to assist in fighting Rosecrans. The people, having waited with long-deferred hopes for deliverance from Confederate dominion, welcomed Burnside with extravagant and joyous demonstrations. He should at once have connected his corps with Rosecrans', but made various excuses for not doing so, and finally did not do it at all.

Longstreet had, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, got orders to lead an expedition against Burnside. Burnside seems to have been less worried about his own safety than were the authorities at Washington. For as soon as Longstreet had arrived in the vicinity of Knoxville, he sent a dispatch to Grant, proposing to retire gradually before Longstreet and

thus draw him further away from Chattanooga, in order to assist Grant with his plans. Grant was pleased to see that Burnside had confidence in his own powers, as well as to know that he was able to assist him with his plans.

Acting on the orders received from Grant, he fell back from Loudon on the 15th, marching towards Knoxville. Longstreet, with great energy, pushed after him, endeavoring to cut him off from Knoxville; but Burnside by a rapid march prevented this and was soon in that place. He had nearly twelve thousand men, to which force was added a partially organized body of loyal Tennesseans. Longstreet besieged the place with fifteen thousand veteran troops, an army which, with other additions, soon amounted to twenty thousand men.

Burnside still held partial communications with the country outside, and the loyal farmers floated supplies on rafts down the Tennessee River for his men and animals.

There was a considerable time when no news of him was heard in Washington and the President was anxious about him. When Mr. Lincoln was told that firing had been heard at Knoxville, he was hopeful. He said it reminded him of a woman he knew in Illinois who had a large number of children, of whom she took very little care. When she heard one of them bawling she would say, "Thank the Lord there's one of my young ones alive." So long as there was firing heard at Knoxville Burnside was not captured.

After Grant had put the Confederate army to flight



at Chattanooga by capturing Missionary Ridge, he had ordered Sherman to march to the relief of Knoxville. And the day after that battle Sheridan also was ordered to prepare for a march to the relief of Burnside. The stores of clothing at Chattanooga were very scanty for refitting his men for such an expedition, and their knapsacks and extra clothing having been left behind before the fight at Murfreesboro, the men were in poor plight for such a march in winter. Their clothing was thin, threadbare, ragged, and ill-fitted for a campaign in the high mountain country of East Tennessee. As Sheridan's teams were in good condition, he left them behind to bring clothing for his men, if any should be received at Chattanooga.

On the 21st of November the Fourth Corps, to which he belonged, began its march. The men carried in their haversacks four days' rations, while a small boat with food supplies steamed up the river, parallel with their march, in order to give further supplies. Sherman, marching at a greater distance from the river, was able to subsist his army on the country. In a few days Sherman joined the right of the Fourth Corps, and the whole force went forward to Knoxville. They arrived at Maysville, December 5, and there learned that Longstreet had, shortly before their arrival, attempted to capture Knoxville by a desperate assault; but meeting with a bloody repulse and great losses, he had raised the siege and marched away on a road leading to Virginia.

Upon receiving this information Sherman turned and marched back for Chattanooga again; while the

Fourth Corps went forward to Knoxville for the purpose of pursuing Longstreet. They found that Burnside's army was not as deficient in food as had been supposed, but that he had cleaned out about all of the supplies in the region around. Sheridan did not cross the Holstein River, but for the purpose of getting subsistence for his division from the surrounding country, made his headquarters at Sevierville. The country was so rich in supplies of food and the people so enthusiastically loyal and glad of their presence, that they soon had such a surplus of food that they could send some to Burnside at Knoxville.

The people could not do too much for the Union army. Many of the men had been compelled to hide in the mountains or flee the country on account of their Union sentiments, and their wives and daughters who remained were especially grateful for the presence of the division to protect them. Very soon, however, and just as his men had begun thoroughly to enjoy the abundance of supplies and the hearty hospitality of the people, Sheridan was ordered to move his division to Knoxville, as Longstreet was still threatening the place.

His men were at this time painfully destitute of clothing, especially shoes. In many cases, to protect them from the cold, they had been compelled to make a substitute for shoes from pieces of their blankets. The snow was several inches in depth, and the division had no tents or other shelters except such as they could improvise from their rubber blankets. The cutting mountain winds and the intense cold made the work of campaigning in their destitute condition very hard.

About five hundred of the men who were without shoes had to be left in Knoxville when the division advanced to pursue Longstreet. Sheridan's great heart was sore over the condition of his brave and faithful men, and he tried his uttermost to provide for them. He had ordered from Chattanooga a train of wagons with supplies, but when it arrived General Foster had taken it and issued it *pro rata* to the men in Knoxville. This, though just, was hard, and Sheridan thought that if the other generals had exerted themselves they might have provided for their own men. Hoping for better luck next time, Sheridan had another train with supplies brought to Knoxville. This time, before the wagons got into town, the clothing was concealed under hay and other forage, and in that way was brought to his men; for Sheridan knew that if his men once got the clothing on their backs, it would require a fight to regain it for general distribution.

On the 15th of January, 1864, Sheridan began an advance for the double purpose of threatening the enemy and subsisting his men. The other troops of the Fourth Corps crossed the Holstein River on a bridge constructed by the army at Strawberry Plains, while Sheridan's division forded the river above that point. The water was deep and cold, and the ice and snow floating on the surface made fording difficult; but it was at last successfully accomplished, and Sheridan's force reached Dandridge on the 17th. Here Sheridan met with a General Sturgis in command of cavalry, who was anxious to have him go out with him and see him "whip the rebel cavalry." Sheridan declined the

invitation, as he wished to see to his men when they arrived and select their encampments. He had reached his headquarters in the village, when a messenger came from Sturgis saying that he was driven back by the enemy. It was soon evident that instead of whipping the rebel cavalry the "boot was on the other leg," and Sturgis was having served out to him the punishment that he had promised to give the Confederates. It turned out, however, that the enemy were making a reconnaissance for information rather than for a fight, and they soon began to fall back to the place from whence they had come.

Meanwhile, General Granger had determined that Dandridge was not a safe position, and decided to withdraw a part of the troops to Strawberry Plains. But before doing this the question of supplying food to his men came up, and it was determined to send the Fourth Corps out for supplies across the French Broad River, if a bridge could be built on which to cross the men. This was undertaken by Sheridan, providing that each division sent to him twenty-five of its wagons with which to build the bridge. When his wagons were got together and unloaded, they were put into position, one after the other, by being drawn into the stream to the other side of the river, the mules unhitched, and the poles of each wagon fastened under the hind axle of the one in front, and the tailboard let down to span the space between them. But there were not enough wagons to reach across the stream, for the wagons promised by the other division commanders did not come. So, to complete the bridge, Sheridan took

from his own division all the wagons needed and finished it late in the afternoon. He had begun marching one of his brigades over it, when he got word that Longstreet was advancing to attack him. So there he was, with his baggage on the banks of the stream and his wagons in the river. He sent back word of his distressing plight, but could not get help. For, after the project of foraging had been abandoned, no doubt each division commander was too intent on looking out for himself to give him aid.

Sheridan got orders to fall back, but, determined that he would not abandon his wagons and the supplies that were on the banks of the stream, he threw out a strong force to watch for the Confederates and, with the remainder of his men, went to work and rescued his wagons and baggage. By daylight he had succeeded in saving them without interference from the enemy, Longstreet's real purpose in advancing having been a blind to cover or protect a retreat towards Lynchburg, Virginia. Sheridan then marched to Strawberry Plains and, by taking a shorter route, got there, in spite of his troubles with the bridge, as soon as the rest of the army. He was much distressed, however, when the beef contractor informed him that the enemy had captured his herd of cattle. But he got some comfort when he learned that the cattle were so poor and weak that the rebels could not get them away on their own legs, and had to abandon them.

General Foster had now superseded Burnside; but as Foster was suffering from old wounds he had



turned the command over to Park who in turn had turned it over to Granger, who tried to unload the burden on Sheridan; but the latter protested, saying it seemed like the small-pox,—catching. This brought Granger to the front at Dandridge.

About this time General Grant visited Knoxville to view the situation for himself, and to see about opening the railroad between Chattanooga and Knoxville, so that supplies could be brought to Knoxville by railway, instead of through the Cumberland Gap by wagons. The railroad had reached Loudon, Tennessee, but it took so much time to build a bridge over the Tennessee River that supplies were still scarce and the animals were starving.

In order to be nearer their base of supplies, and also nearer Chattanooga to assist in case of an attack on that place, Sheridan's division was ordered to move to Loudon. The marches of the winter had been so useless and exhausting, that the men were as glad as their general to take the road for this point, where they arrived January 27, 1864. The men, with more plentiful supplies and with a refit of clothing, became more contented; and as the term of service of many of them had expired, most of them, in spite of their previous hardships, reënlisted.

After providing for the refitting and provisioning of his men, Sheridan, who was much run down by hard service, got the first leave of absence that he had received since entering the army in 1853. He spent a month or more in the North, and returned in better health to his division in March, expecting to participate

in the campaign which he believed would begin with the approach of summer.

As we all know, General Grant was made Commander-in-Chief, on March 12, 1864, and assigned to the command of all the armies of the United States. When Grant reached Washington he made some changes, among others relieving Pleasanton from command of the cavalry of the Army of the Potomac and appointing Sheridan to that command. On the 23d of March the latter received the following telegram:

“Lieutenant-General Grant directs that Major-General Sheridan immediately repair to Washington and report to the Adjutant-General of the army.

W. H. HALLECK,  
*Major-General, Chief-of Staff.*”

## CHAPTER XI

### SHERIDAN MADE COMMANDER OF CAVALRY IN THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC

As you know, the general plan of the war was to besiege the Confederacy on every side, assault it at every possible point and drive in its defenders, and to restore the Federal Government in all territory as fast as it was regained. To this end there were scores and hundreds of battles, great and small, all along the coast from Hampton, Virginia, to Galveston, Texas; along the Mississippi from New Orleans northward and Cairo southward; along the northern boundary from the Mississippi River to the Cumberland Mountains and from these mountains around to Hampton again. But of all the great line, no other part was so desperately attacked or so strongly defended as that of the Potomac River. Here the great Army of the Potomac faced the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia. Here were the heaviest brigades, the choicest troops, the best armament, the most trusted officers. Here the breathless interest of the country was centered. Tremendous as were some of the engagements elsewhere, they seemed of minor importance beside the campaign on the Potomac, or only important because of the generals that were being tried out there for the great service.

The reason of this centering of interest was that

here, less than one hundred miles apart, were the two capitals, Washington and Richmond. You know that in war each side tries to hurt his enemy as much as possible, and one of the worst of hurts is to take his capital. The "capital" is the head of a country, and cutting off the head is liable to kill the victim. This was the reason that the biggest armies and best generals were on the line of the Potomac; and Grant was called from the Army of the West to command here because he had shown himself a better general than any one who had yet held the command.

In one of his first interviews with President Lincoln, Grant had expressed his dissatisfaction with the cavalry corps. It had done practically nothing but picket and guard duty; while the dashing cavalry of the Confederacy had again and again made long raids in the North and ridden pretty nearly all around our army. The Southern people, having only a few roads and those poor, were used to getting about their country on saddle horses, and so learned to ride about as soon as they learned to walk. The Northern cavalry on the other hand, were not generally experienced riders.

Grant had said to General Halleck, as well as to President Lincoln, "The cavalry should do its part in the fighting, and we must have the best man possible to command it."

"Sheridan would be a good man for the place," suggested Halleck.

"The very man I want," said Grant, with great earnestness.

"Well, General Grant," said Mr. Lincoln, "you can have any one you want." And so Sheridan was sent for, as we have seen a few pages back.

Now Sheridan, as an officer in the regular army, was in the infantry; but he was an all round able general. The fault with many of the superior officers was that they could not comprehend big plans and looked upon small things as beneath their attention. Nothing was either too great or too small for Sheridan. No matter how extensive the theater of war, he set himself to study all its hills, streams, and roads. No matter how many brigades and divisions were engaged, he knew where they all were and what they ought to do. And he had the high courage that knew that the bravest thing was always the safest. If a charge was to be made, he inspired his men by going with them into the fight.

Nothing escaped Sheridan's attention. He knew his men could not march bare-footed, nor fight on empty stomachs, nor keep up brave spirits without encouragement from their officers. And so he saw to it that they were fed and clothed and heartened. If they bivouacked on the bare ground, the lee side of a log made his bed; if the fight was a hard one, he fought beside them. A great army with poor officers is a helpless thing, but even a small army with a great general can do wonders.

Grant had the great quality of seeing men of action as they really were, and not as others saw them, or as they desired to appear; he was given to believing the evidence of his own eyes, rather than the hearsay of



other people. He had noted Sheridan from the first as a man after his own heart. He had seen him at Missionary Ridge, and was most pleased at his persistency in pressing the enemy after the battle and trying to reap the full benefits of that victory. The two men had much in common and easily understood each other. It was said that when Grant spoke of Sheridan, his usually impassive face would light up and his eyes would gleam with enthusiasm.

Although Sheridan was an infantry officer, yet, up to the time of his coming East to take a part in the Civil War, most of his experience had been with cavalry. When, however, he had been assigned to command a brigade of infantry, and afterwards a division, he worked faithfully and studied hard to master all the requirements of his position. In fact, one great secret of Sheridan's success was his tireless capacity for work. When others slept, he studied and worked, not only for the organization needed for victory, but to look out for little things, neglected by others, and also for the comfort of the brave men who served under him. He selected comfortable and convenient camping places. If their food was not good, he knew it and remedied it, as though it had been given to him for his use instead of to his men. There was nothing that the quartermaster or commissary could give that he did not obtain for the comfort of his men. Finally, he assured them victory in return for the sacrifice of their lives. Soldiers are willing to give much to a general who does this; for they above all things do not like to see needless and care-

less sacrifice of lives. Sheridan never threw a life away; he always gave an equivalent for their toil and sacrifice.

In return for this incessant care his men loved and admired him. When they learned that "Little Phil," as they affectionately called him, was about to leave them, tears stood in the eyes of many rough soldiers that he had commanded. On his part he could not trust himself to a formal parting from those for whom he held the warmest sentiments of esteem and tender affection.

When he took the train for Chattanooga, his heart was full at the thought that he was about to sunder those ties of comradeship that had been formed amid hardships and battles. The officers and men of his division, however, gathered spontaneously on the surrounding hillsides near the station to see him off, with waving of hands and demonstrations of affection.

When he arrived at Chattanooga and for the first time learned of the new duties that he was required to assume, his heart almost failed him, for he feared that he was not competent to take a position in which so many others had failed. But a soldier cannot choose; he goes where duty calls him—and where he is ordered. Obedience is the first law of military success,—obedience if need be in the face of death; and in war, among soldiers, the need is often imperative.

Sheridan knew nothing, or little, of the army in which he was to take a great command, and nothing of the topography of the country in which he was to fight battles. He knew Grant and Halleck, but

very few other officers of that great army, and saw the necessity of having some one with him who was familiar with the country and who had served with the Army of the Potomac. He took with him as his Chief-of-Staff Captain James W. Forsyth, a personal friend, who had served in that army during the Peninsular Campaign and at Antietam. He also took with him his brother, Captain M. V. Sheridan, who had served as his aide-de-camp all through his career with the armies of the West.

The general arrived in Washington April 4, 1864. After getting quarters at a hotel, he called on Halleck at the war office. At that time Sheridan was 33 years of age, but looked much younger. He was slight of person, measuring only five feet five inches in height and weighing only one hundred and fifteen pounds. His nerves were like steel and his muscles like whipcords; his face expressed intense mental concentration and activity. To the ordinary observer he seemed ungainly on account of his short legs and long body.

When Halleck presented our hero to Edwin M. Stanton, the Secretary of War, that imperious official looked Sheridan over as though he would estimate his value and read the very secrets of his heart; but his cold, calculating manner gave no indication of whether his impressions were favorable or otherwise.

After this ordeal was over Sheridan went to the White House with General Halleck to call on the President. Mr. Lincoln received him with both hands extended in welcome, and his haggard, sorrowful, careworn face lit up with a gleam of pleasure, as he

said: "I hope that you will do all that General Grant thinks you can do. The cavalry has not been of as much service as we could wish."

"I will do the best I can, sir," said Sheridan, modestly, "as I always have."

"Well," said Mr. Lincoln, thoughtfully, "General Grant and some of the rest of us want to get more out of it than it has so far given;" and then, with a gleam of humor lighting his face, he quoted an oft-repeated phrase, "Who ever saw a dead cavalryman?" But his manner in repeating this stale question implied that he was joking rather than in earnest.

After getting the order that assigned him to the command of the cavalry of the Army of the Potomac, Sheridan the next morning presented himself at the headquarters of the army.

While Sheridan is on his way, let us, for a better understanding of what follows, look at the situation in the East as we have already looked over the achievements of the Army of the West.

The Army of the Potomac and its antagonist, the Army of Northern Virginia, after three years of war were in about the same relative position as when the war began. In the Peninsular Campaign, when commanded by McClellan, the Army of the Potomac had advanced up the York Peninsula to within a few miles of Richmond, had fought desperate battles, but finally went back to the line of the Potomac. It then fought the battle of Antietam, driving the rebel army back from invading Maryland.

Then there was dissatisfaction with McClellan, and

Burnside took command. He fought the dreadful battle of Fredericksburg, and was defeated and had to retreat to the north side of the Rapidan River. Then Hooker took command, fought the battle of Chancellorsville, and retreated to the position from which his army had started. Then, in the midst of the Gettysburg campaign, when Lee, commanding the Confederate army, had invaded Pennsylvania, General Meade had taken command and had achieved a decided victory at Gettysburg, but had failed to follow up the enemy. He was still in command of the Army of the Potomac under General Grant's direction.

Forts had been secured along the Atlantic coast from Hampton Roads, Virginia, to Pensacola, and footing ground on the coast at Norfolk, Plymouth, Washington, and Newbern; and that was all the real advantage that had been gained. At the time of the arrival of General Sheridan at Grant's headquarters, the Army of the Potomac was on the north bank of the Rapidan River facing its antagonist, the Army of Northern Virginia. The Confederate army was commanded by Robert E. Lee, who had been educated at West Point and had served under General Scott, but who had left the service of his country to take up arms against it.

The cavalry of the Union army had hitherto been used in detachments, and not as a united body like other army corps. It had not done much to justify its formation except incidentally; and the expression of derision quoted by Mr. Lincoln, "Who ever saw a dead cavalryman?" was used by many in the army to ex-



press the littleness of its achievements. At the time our hero took command, the corps consisted of three divisions and twelve batteries of horse artillery. The first division had three brigades, and was commanded by Brigadier-General Alfred T. A. Torbert, a graduate of West Point and an experienced officer. The second division, made up of two brigades, was commanded by Brigadier-General David Mc M. Gregg, also a graduate of the Military Academy. The third division, of two brigades, was commanded by Brigadier-General James H. Wilson, an educated soldier of good reputation, and also a graduate of West Point. Captain Robinson, a veteran soldier of the Mexican War, commanded the artillery.

Sheridan was not well acquainted with any of these officers, but wisely determined to retain them in their commands.

All this may seem a little dry to my young readers, but if they will keep these names and organizations in mind it will help them to understand what follows.

Shortly after his arrival Sheridan reviewed his new command. There were several general officers present at this review, among them Generals Meade, Hancock, and Sedgwick. The cavalrymen looked strong and soldierly, but Sheridan's keen eye detected that the horses were thin and had apparently been overworked. On inquiry he learned that they were used for what he considered needless picket duty away out beyond the infantry and artillery camps of the army, where there was scarcely a Confederate soldier in sight.

He saw at once that this policy diminished the effi-

ciency of the cavalry; for however willing and able the men, they could go only as far as the horses could carry them. He at once determined, if possible, to stop this piecemeal work and to husband the strength of his horses and use them in compact masses against the enemy.

General Meade, commanding the Army of the Potomac under Grant's direction, was an educated soldier, and a good one; but under the strain of responsibilities he was nervous, cross, and sharp-tempered. Sheridan called to see him, in order to get his permission to carry out the reforms at which we have hinted.

"General Sheridan? Oh, yes; you are to command the cavalry of the army, I believe."

"Yes, General," replied Sheridan with decision, but respectfully. "As I am to be responsible, there are things that I would like to have done, or undone, to make it more effective."

"What do you propose?" said Meade, rather sharply. "Our cavalry is very good as it is."

"In the first place, the horses are out of condition," replied our little general; "they are too hard worked for any real hard duty."

"Yes," said General Meade, "but I don't see how that is to be helped while they are doing picket duty and guarding trains and doing other duties required of them."

"That's just what I want to speak about, General Meade," said Sheridan. "The strength of the horses and of the men is wasted, so it appears to me, in useless duty. They ought to be kept together, like other

corps of the army, to whip the enemy and not to do picket duty and guard trains."

"I do not see how that can be helped," said Meade, rather petulantly. "We must guard our trains and protect the flanks of the army."

"General Meade," said Sheridan, energetically, "if you will let me use the cavalry as I think best, you will not be troubled about protecting your trains against the enemy's cavalry; I will give them so much to think about that they won't trouble either the trains or the flanks of the army."

"It has been the custom in our army," said Meade, "to use the cavalry in these duties, and I cannot see that the changes that you propose would make it more efficient, but rather less so."

"Well, General Meade," said Sheridan, "I have given you my ideas of the way to make it an effective arm of the service for this army. The way they are being used takes the soldierly qualities out of officers and men. They lose confidence in themselves, and everybody else does, too. If I have my way I will give them confidence to meet the enemy and whip them, so they won't have to guard trains or the flanks of the army."

These ideas of Sheridan's were contrary to Meade's convictions of what should be done, and he gave Sheridan slight encouragement that he would give him leave to carry them out. For though large bodies of cavalry had at different times been massed for some special service they were not massed together for duty. Yet his talk with Meade resulted in the cavalry being taken

from its exhausting picket duty; and this gave Sheridan about two weeks in which to nurse his horses and get them fit for the work that was required of them in the coming campaign.

General Meade thought that the commander of his cavalry should be at headquarters to take orders from him,—in fact, a sort of staff officer to receive and execute his commands; while Sheridan, as we have seen, thought he should be with his troops and keep them together to fight the enemy. Our general was obedient, but at the same time persistent that his was the right way to make the cavalry a strong and active arm of the service.

This was the situation existing between Sheridan and Meade when the campaign of 1864 opened with the terrible Battle of the Wilderness. In the following chapter my readers will see how Sheridan overcame Meade's objections, making the cavalry a strong arm of the service and achieving with it victory that for a time rendered the Confederate cavalry almost useless.

## CHAPTER XII

### FIGHTING IN THE WILDERNESS

THE cavalry of the Army of the Potomac had hitherto fought under disadvantages hinted at in the preceding chapter; it had really never had a fair trial. The general who commanded the enemy's cavalry kept his force together and used it as a mechanic uses a hammer, to strike compact, decisive blows. The Union cavalry, on the contrary, had been used piecemeal, in disunited action, so that its blows fell with little more effect in battle than would a handful of sand thrown against the wind. As we have seen, Sheridan had detected this weak and wasteful action, and had sought in his interview, which we have recorded in the preceding chapter, with General Meade to remedy it. From knowledge that he had gained of the topography of the country, its wooded lands traversed by parallel streams, he felt that there would be but little chance for his command to acquit itself with credit. He was, however, loyally determined to do his best to carry out all the plans of his commander.

The two great armies facing each other were waiting for the disappearance of the patches of snow on the mountains, which would proclaim the coming of spring and of firm, dry roads. Both armies were in the highest condition of efficiency; their commanders



were both men tried in many battles. Lee was confident and buoyant; Grant, dogged and determined.

The cavalry of Lee's army, commanded by General J. E. B. Stuart, was composed of little more than eight thousand men. It was organized in two divisions, commanded by Generals Wade Hampton and Fitzhugh Lee. Hampton's division was composed of three brigades, commanded by Generals Gordon, Young, and Rosser; while Lee's division was also composed of three brigades, commanded by Generals Wickham, Lomax, and W. H. F. Lee.

The two weeks following Sheridan's taking command was a period of ceaseless activity for him. He seemed never to sleep, night or day. He was studying maps; interviewing guides or others who could give him information about fords and roads; receiving and studying reports of his subordinate officers; and visiting his encampments to inform himself of the condition of his men and their animals, so as to know and supply their needs. He had, in that short time, gathered the reins of control in his hands, and was ready for the supreme task before him. He had no delusions about the magnitude of the work before him; he knew that he was not simply to fight the greatest leader of cavalry of the Confederacy, but must also combat Meade's firmly rooted conceptions as to how cavalry should be used to render it most effective. In this chapter we shall show how Meade finally conceded to him the right to use the cavalry in what he thought was the right way.

At first there had been the natural feeling among

the officers and men of his command that an officer might have been selected from home material. But Sheridan's energetic reforms, such as relieving the cavalry from keeping a line of videttes sixty miles in length around the army, besides doing ordinary patrol duty, met with their hearty approval and helped to overcome their objections to a new leader not of themselves.

On one occasion he sent one of his staff to order the return of more than a company of his men that, for some time, had been acting as a bodyguard for one of the generals. An attempt was made to get a modification of the order, but Sheridan was inflexible. He said, "Give my compliments to General —— and say I am commanding the cavalry of this army, and I want every one of them!"

At last the supreme moment for action arrived. In the darkness of night five bridges were quickly thrown across the Rapidan River, and at midnight, on the 4th of May, the Army of the Potomac moved out from its encampments on its great adventure of arms,—Sheridan with two of his divisions leading the way, and Torbert's division guarding its rear.

Lee's army, behind intrenchments, stretched along the river for nearly twenty miles. It was Grant's plan to move by his left flank and compel him to come out from behind his intrenchments and fight on equal terms. Grant knew that this cross-country route was more difficult than McClellan's peninsular advance, but he believed there were compensating advantages in the ease of protecting Washington and of securing new

bases of supply for his army, as he moved along his contemplated march.

Sheridan, after making details for escort, guard, and other duty, had left him a formidable body of ten thousand horsemen. Wilson's division of Sheridan's cavalry, at the head of Warren's corps of infantry, crossed the Rapidan River at Germania Ford and arrived at the Wilderness Tavern on the afternoon of the 5th at two o'clock; while Gregg's division, at the head of Hancock's corps, crossed the Rapidan at Ely's Ford and at ten o'clock in the morning reached Chancellorsville. Here Sheridan established his headquarters as a convenient point from which to send orders and to receive intelligence from his command. Generals Meade and Grant had, meanwhile, established their headquarters at Germania Ford, where Meade was in direct communication with Wilson's cavalry of Sheridan's command.

So far, Grant's vast army had made its march with perfect success and without battle. It had turned the Confederate flank, and another day's march would bring them out of the tangled wood to open ground west and south of the Wilderness. But, swift as had been the movements of Grant, Lee's were equally swift and decided. When his signal officers gave him intelligence of Grant's movement, he at once gathered his army together and hurled it down the turnpike and Plank Road, so that on the morning of the 5th it was ready to strike at the right flank of the moving columns of the Union army. When the quick crackling of musketry informed Grant that the enemy had been

encountered by Warren's corps, he did not suppose the enemy were in great force before him, but believed that Lee, after his line of defenses had been turned, had put out a force to mask his retreat.

The "Wilderness" where the fighting was to occur was a very bad place for the Union army. The Confederates could put their men in position in the tangled woods and then await the coming of the Union columns, who betrayed their approach by the rustling of the bushes as they pushed their way through the low growth of trees entangled by vines and briars. When fighting, the troops could not see from one end of a regiment to the other. Probably no other battle of such magnitude ever took place under such blind conditions. It was not long before the crackle of musketry was heard along the line for miles in this colossal sanguinary game of blind man's buff.

On the morning of May 5, when the Union column had resumed its march, the left under Hancock moved on Shady Grove Church, while Warren, commanding its left, moved to Parker's Store. Sheridan had instructed Wilson with his cavalry to advance only as far as Parker's Store; but Meade directed Wilson to leave only one regiment there and to advance with the rest of the division toward Craig's Meeting House. This was the beginning of the conflicting orders between Sheridan and Meade, and such orders are always bad, if not disastrous. Wilson did not know that the Fifth (Warren's) Corps was approaching and, as the Confederate infantry had now appeared at Parker's Store, his communications with Meade were soon cut off and

he found himself between two forces of the enemy, like meat between two pieces of bread in a sandwich. The situation was alarming; but Wilson extricated himself from it by crossing the Po river and reaching Todd's Tavern. General Meade, discovering that Wilson was in trouble, sent word to Sheridan, to whom this was the first intimation that his orders had been changed by Meade.

The conflict in the tangled Wilderness on the 5th of May was not so much a battle as it was the sudden grapple of two antagonists meeting each other in a terrible wrestle. It was decreed, however, that a real and desperate battle should take place in these same entangled woods.

On the morning of the 6th, while Custer's and Devins' brigades of Torbert's division of cavalry were fighting at the Furnaces and had repulsed the Confederate attack, Sheridan believed he could hold the line gained. But just then an alarming dispatch from Meade arrived, saying that Hancock's corps of infantry was hard pressed by the enemy and that his flank was turned. It proved later that Hancock's flank had not been turned; but, acting under the orders that he had received, Sheridan drew in all his cavalry near Chancellorsville. When this mistake by Meade was discovered, Sheridan had to fight hard to regain, at a heavy cost in killed and wounded, the position which he had abandoned on account of Meade's mistake.

No words can depict the terrible fighting of the two days' Battle of the Wilderness. Both armies met with



frightful losses, and when the dawn of the third day came to light up the concealing tangle of wood and vines and briers where the dead and wounded lay, neither Grant nor Lee showed any disposition to begin again the fight in an offensive battle. Both armies were shattered and bleeding. When Grant threw out skirmishers on the 7th, the Confederates were found behind their defenses.

When, on the 7th, Meade ordered his trains to be parked at Piney Branch Church preparatory to the movement ordered by Grant to Spottsylvania Court House, he did not know that place was held by the Confederates. So, as Sheridan could not obey this command on account of the order which Meade gave because of supposed disaster to Hancock he held his cavalry in the vicinity of Aldrich's until the ground where Meade had ordered him to park could be regained. The struggle that ensued for its possession brought on the cavalry battle known as Todd's Tavern. The Confederates had taken this position to prevent Sheridan from pressing the rear of Lee's army as it fell back to a stronger position. It was an obstinate and fluctuating battle; but finally Sheridan got possession of the crossroad and drove the Confederates before him almost to Spottsylvania Court House. Then, from motives of prudence recalling the pursuit, he encamped his two divisions near Todd's Tavern in an open field.

The two days' fighting in the Wilderness was not as decisive a Union success as Grant had hoped it would be, and he determined to make a rapid march and seize



FIGHTING IN THE WILDERNESS.



Spottsylvania in order to intercept Lee's communications while preserving his own. So, with this in view, he began a night march of his infantry to Todd's Tavern preparatory to shifting all his infantry to Spottsylvania Court House. To assist in this movement Sheridan ordered Gregg and Merritt to march at daylight on the 8th and take possession of Snell's Bridge over the Po River, and also directed Wilson's cavalry to take possession of Spottsylvania as early as possible. Wilson, marching from Alsop's house, got possession of Spottsylvania and drove the Confederate cavalry nearly a mile beyond it. General Meade had, meanwhile, arrived at Todd's Tavern and so modified the orders that Sheridan had issued to Gregg and Merritt as to spoil Sheridan's plan. He ordered Merritt to move out in the van of the infantry column, and in obeying this order the men of Warren's infantry got mingled with his cavalry and were hindered in their march. When Sheridan came up he found General Warren wrathful over the hindrance of his march by the horsemen.

Sheridan believed that, had his orders not been interfered with, it was doubtful whether the bloody battle at Spottsylvania that cost so dearly in human life, would have taken place. When Sheridan, on the morning of the 8th, found that his orders had been meddled with he protested strongly, but it was too late. The Fifth Corps of infantry advancing to capture the village of Spottsylvania, encountered the enemy and was driven back with heavy losses.

General Meade, angry at this disaster, which had

really come about through his own orders, summoned Sheridan to headquarters and complained bitterly to him of the cavalry. In substance this conversation took place:

"General Sheridan," said Meade, angrily, "the cavalry has crowded the Spottsylvania road so that it prevented Warren's corps from reaching Spottsylvania in season to get possession; and General Warren has complained to me about it."

"If that is true," said Sheridan, in a low, decided tone, "it is your own fault, General Meade."

"What do you mean by that?" said Meade. "You command the cavalry, or pretend to, don't you?"

"What I mean," said Sheridan, angrily, "is this: by interfering with my orders you have got my cavalry mixed up with Warren's men, stopping their march; and not only that, but you have broken up my combinations. Such interference will make the cavalry inefficient and useless before long, in spite of all that I can do."

Meade was pale with anger, and though Sheridan held his temper he was really as angry, and the wordy disagreement waxed hot until at last Sheridan said:

"I can whip the Confederate cavalry out of their boots if you will let me; but as you insist on giving orders contrary to mine without consulting or notifying me, I will not give the cavalry another order; you can command it hereafter if you wish to; I will not give it another order!"

"What do you mean by that, General Sheridan?"



interrogated Meade, rather cooled by Sheridan's bold attitude.

"I mean this," replied Sheridan, "that so long as you insist upon giving orders that conflict with mine, you shall be responsible for them; I will not have them loaded on to me; I am done!"

This ended the interview, and Meade went to Grant with his grievance, telling him what Sheridan had said.

Grant listened patiently and with imperturbable silence, no doubt thinking both of his subordinates were at fault, and probably fearing that he should lose a valuable cavalry commander by the quarrel. But when Meade repeated Sheridan's saying, that he could whip the rebel cavalry, Grant said, in his quiet but sharp manner, "Did Sheridan say that?" "Yes," replied Meade. "Well," said Grant, decidedly, "*let him go and do it, then!*"

General Meade knew this was a command, and soon sent an order to Sheridan, saying: "The major-general commanding directs you immediately to concentrate your available mounted forces, and with your ammunition trains and such supply trains as are filled (exclusive of ambulances), proceed against the enemy's cavalry; and when your supplies are exhausted, proceed *via* New Market and Green Bay to Haxall's Landing on the James River, there communicating with General Butler and procuring supplies, and return to this army. Your dismounted men will be left with the train here."

In the following chapter it will be shown how Sheridan obeyed that order, and the great results of it.

## CHAPTER XIII

### SHERIDAN'S RAID AROUND LEE

THE order to Sheridan recorded in the preceding chapter was written on the 8th of May, 1864, and received by him the same day. He also received verbal instructions from Grant himself, which, in addition to the instructions that we have elsewhere given, ordered him to cut the two railroads—one running southwest through Gordonsville, Charlottesville, and Lynchburg, the other to Richmond—and, when compelled to do so, to move on the James River and draw from Butler's supplies. This move would take him past the entire rear of Lee's army.

In the meantime the great battle of Spottsylvania was impending. Lee had, after the Wilderness fighting, withdrawn his army behind a triple line of intrenchments and intervening thickets against which, on the 9th, Grant had massed his men to overwhelm or destroy him. The men of both armies were taking positions for this sanguinary battle when, on the 8th, Sheridan gave orders for the concentration of his cavalry in preparation for the expedition.

He sent for his division commanders and to them detailed his plans and instructions, by which he was to move out in rear of the enemy, draw the Confederate cavalry after him, and then fight and defeat them.

"I have told General Meade," he said, "that I could whip Stuart's cavalry if he would let me. It was my own proposition, and now we are going to do it! I shall expect success, and nothing else, from you."

At first this proposition staggered his division commanders by its boldness; for it was not only a challenge for battle with the whole Confederate cavalry, but in executing so audacious a movement they would also naturally have to encounter other armed forces thrown out by the enemy. Hitherto, expeditions of mounted men had made raids, but they were simply hurried rides through hostile territory to cut telegraph wires and destroy railroads and bridges, without fighting, except in self-defense when their way was obstructed or as a measure of protection against pursuit.

Early the next morning, after receiving orders from Meade and Grant, Sheridan, having made his preparations with lightning rapidity, started out on his great adventure, with Merritt's division in the lead. Each cavalryman carried three days' rations for himself and half a day's ration of grain for his horse. This grand array of horsemen moved out at a walk, the moving column making a formidable appearance. When well closed up in marching order, four abreast, the column was thirteen miles long. According to a Southerner who saw the column moving, it took four hours for it to pass at a trot, a given point.

The commander of the Confederate cavalry was not long in learning of the movement. In two hours' time it had caught up; General Stuart had sent Fitzhugh Lee

with his cavalry to attack Sheridan's force; and Wickham's brigade of his division began to harass the rear. At one time, when a section of a New York battery was charged upon by the Confederates, an officer fought his way to the artillery and, placing his hand upon one of the guns, exclaimed imperiously, "This gun is mine!" "Not by a blamed sight!" said the rough cannoneer; and, disdaining to shoot him, knocked him from his horse with his fist and made him prisoner. The men had become imbued with the spirit and confidence of their great commander.

Stuart had meanwhile directed his whole command to unite the next day at Beaver Dam Station, to resist the audacious raiders. After Merritt's division had passed the North Anna River, the gallant Custer, commanding one of his brigades, went forward to Beaver Dam Station for the purpose of cutting the Virginia Central Railroad, in order to hinder the Confederate army from getting supplies of ammunition and food. While on his way he encountered a small force of the Confederates, which, with his usual impetuous energy, he speedily drove before him, charged into the Beaver Dam Station, recaptured about four hundred Union prisoners already embarked on the cars for Richmond, destroyed the station and three trains of cars, and two locomotives, ninety wagons, eight miles or more of railroad, besides telegraph lines, and two hundred thousand pounds of bacon, with a large quantity of medical stores intended for Lee's army. Also a large quantity of small arms were gathered from the battlefield. The reader can well understand how glad the

Union prisoners were to be liberated, and how they cheered again and again and rejoiced at their deliverance. Here, in sight of burning buildings and blazing cars, the main body of Sheridan's cavalry rested for the night; though not without interruption, for the skirmishers of the enemy buzzed around them like angry hornets disturbed in their nests.

By the morning of the 10th a few shell, thrown into the camp of Gregg's division, showed that the enemy's cavalry had concentrated a large force there. The quick *pop, pop, pop* of carbines and muskets began to sound like firecrackers at a Fourth-of-July celebration, as brisk skirmishing took place. The march was soon resumed to Ground Squirrel Bridge across the North Anna River.

Stuart, discovering that he had made a mistake in concentrating his cavalry at Beaver Dam Station, began to make great efforts to retrieve the error by trying to get between Sheridan and Richmond. He finally reached Yellow Tavern, six miles from that city, on the morning of the 11th of May.

Sheridan had confused the rebel leader by his baffling tactics and, unmolested, reached the South bank of the North Anna River near Ground Squirrel Bridge, got a good night's rest for his men and horses, and was able to start them the next morning with fresh courage. From here he sent Davis's brigade to destroy the track of the Fredericksburg Railroad at Ashland. In moving there Davis had a severe fight with the Virginia cavalry, but succeeded in destroying bridges and trestles and miles of railroad track, besides a



number of cars. This movement further deceived and mystified the enemy as to Sheridan's intentions.

The appearance of Davis's brigade at Ashland threw Stuart into a state of uncertainty again, and he made the mistake of dividing his forces for the purpose of harassing Sheridan's rear. This enabled the Union commander to concentrate almost his entire corps on Stuart at Yellow Tavern, while a small rearguard fought and amused the pursuers of Davis.

Merritt, who was made aware of the presence of the Confederates on the Ashland and Richmond road as he neared the Brook turnpike, hurried forward to attack them. He got possession of the turnpike and drove the Confederates back several hundred yards east of it. Then Sheridan sent Wilson, with an additional brigade, to form for battle on the east side of the road. The desperate but confident Confederates opened a heavy fire from their cavalry; while their artillery swept the Brook road with an enfilading fire, making it uncomfortably hot for the Union cavalry.

At this, Sheridan sent the gallant Custer, supported by Chapman's brigade, to charge the left of the enemy. At a walk Custer began the advance, then quickened his pace to a trot, and then to a run. With his long hair streaming like a signal to his men, at full speed, with clanking of sabers and clattering of hoofs, Custer in the lead rushed like a whirlwind upon the foe, with Sheridan's dismounted men following. This broke the Confederate left and drove his center and right in rout from the field. The Confederate grip was broken and the battle of Yellow Tavern was won.



DEATH OF GENERAL STUART.



It was at this moment that the daring and beloved Confederate cavalry leader, Stuart, fell mortally wounded in the thick of the fray. This loss of this knightly officer was, to the Confederates, perhaps, a greater loss than that of the battle itself. They could get new men and new horses but never again such a cavalry leader as Stuart. Though Sheridan had defeated him, he admired this great leader who had hitherto fought so bravely and skillfully. But Stuart had met, at last, a foeman worthy of his steel,—one as daring as himself and as fervently in love with his own cause.

During this battle Sheridan was among his men wherever the fight was fiercest, urging, inspiring, and encouraging them. His men and their commanders fought the more bravely, because they knew they had at last a general who was thoughtful for them, and who required from them no exposure to danger that he was not willing if need be to take upon himself.

Though Sheridan had inflicted a terrible, almost irreparable, defeat upon his antagonists, yet he had not annihilated them. One part retreated toward Richmond and the other towards Ashland. Sheridan knew that the intelligence of his presence near the Confederate capital was known there and that the greatest efforts would be made to get together forces for his defeat.

After the battle that we have described, Sheridan sent out a reconnoitering force on the Brook turnpike. With their commander following, this force dashed across the South fork of the Chickahominy. It had



been raining, and the roads were hard to travel; for Virginia roads are unequaled for the quality as well as quantity of mud that can be produced with but little rain for mixing. The enemy were followed into the exterior fortifications of Richmond. Here Sheridan found a road between the two lines of works of the outer defenses, by which he thought he might reach the South side of the Chickahominy and encamp the next night at Fair Oaks. The colored people had told him that General Butler had reached a point within about three miles of Richmond, and he thought if he could get through on this road, it would not only shorten the way to Haxall's, but he might help Butler. (But this information of Butler's position was afterwards found to be incorrect.) So, after caring for the wounded, about eleven o'clock that night he began the march and massed his cavalry by daylight on the 12th south of Meadow Bridge.

This march during the night was at times in such total darkness that a bugler on a white horse in rear of the regiment in front was required to lead each regiment. At some places that night the darkness was lighted up by vivid flames of exploding torpedoes that had been planted on the road. These were loaded shell so fixed to a wire, that when struck by the horses' feet they were exploded. Sheridan learned from some prisoners whom he had set to work to remove them, that these torpedoes had been planted there by the owner of one of the neighboring houses. He therefore ordered them conveyed to the cellar of the house, with arrangements to explode them if the



enemy's cavalry came that way, while the owner and his family were held until it was light.

At one time a portion of his artillery was guided to a place by a man wearing the uniform of a Union soldier. He led them into ambush on the grounds of a near-by residence, where they were met by a blaze of musketry from concealed enemies. The man who had led them into this trap was shot without ceremony.

Richmond was meanwhile greatly frightened and excited, for it was believed that the city was Sheridan's objective. Three brigades of veteran soldiers were hurried up from in front of the Union forces commanded by General Butler, which, with about five thousand irregular troops in the city, made quite a formidable force.

When, on the 12th, Wilson's division of Sheridan's command had reached the Mechanicsville Pike, they encountered the Confederate works and batteries manned by Bragg's soldiers. Sheridan thought it was not wise to attempt to pass to Fair Oaks between the enemy's intrenchments and the Chickahominy, and Custer was instructed to attempt a crossing of that river at Meadow Bridge. When Custer reached there he found that the bridge had been destroyed, and that the Confederate cavalry was on the other side. On learning this, Sheridan ordered the whole of Merritt's division to repair the bridge.

The Confederates kept up an annoying fire, sweeping the bridge with artillery and with musketry. When at last Merritt was able to send over two regi-

ments to drive them away, they were repulsed by the enemy, who had intrenched behind logs and rails. The construction of the bridge, however, was continued and, when finished, the rebels were driven out and went scampering toward Gaines's Mill.

While the foregoing incidents were taking place, the situation of Gregg and Wilson before the defenses of Richmond looked bad. They were within a line of the Confederate defenses and threatened on all sides. South of them, within the garrison of Richmond, was an unknown force; on the east, Merritt was fighting for the bridge, while on the north Gregg was fighting to hold off Gordon's cavalry. It certainly looked like a trap, with the Union cavalry on the inside and the Confederate cat watching outside.

In this emergency a veteran artillery officer was sending his caissons towards the bridge, as that looked to be the only avenue of escape in case of the disaster which seemed impending. Just then Sheridan rode up, saw what was going on, and laughingly inquired, "What are you doing with those caissons?"

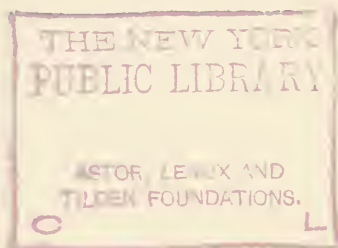
"It looks to me," said the veteran, "as though we were in a mighty tight fix."

"A tight fix!" exclaimed Sheridan. "Why, there is nothing before you but department clerks from Richmond, and they are trembling in their boots! I can take the city if I want to, but I could not hold it; so what would be the use? Send back your caissons, we are going to stay here for a while. Take it easy, men!"

Sheridan had sent out some of his men to find fords.



SHERIDAN'S CAVALRY BEFORE RICHMOND.



They were found, but Sheridan did not care to use them except in an emergency.

While Merritt was building the bridge, the Confederates from Richmond advanced from behind their works and attacked Gregg and Wilson. But Gregg had prepared a surprise for them. He had placed some of his dismounted men among the bushes of a ravine, and when the enemy with a great deal of pomp and display had reached the right spot, these men opened fire with their repeating carbines. At the same time the horse artillery belched shot and shell into their ranks, causing this imposing force to scamper back the way they came, but not with the same confidence. It was said that this attack took place under the eye of Jefferson Davis.

Sheridan in thus accepting battle under circumstances that would have appalled a less cool, courageous, and confident soldier, showed here the same confident spirit that was afterwards seen at Winchester. After the defeat and discomfiture of the enemy, he remained on the battlefield all day undisturbed, burying the dead, caring for the wounded, and reading the Richmond papers.

Two small boys from Richmond came into the Union lines to sell newspapers. They were sharp little fellows, and Sheridan, believing that they might have other views than simply selling their papers, kept them until his cavalry were across the Chickahominy and then let them go.

The purpose of the expedition now having been mostly accomplished, he joined Wilson and went into



camp near Gaines's Mill. The march was then resumed, and on the 14th of May he reached James River with all his wounded and a large number of prisoners. These were turned over to General Butler, his wounded being nursed and cared for by Butler's surgeons and nurses. By the 17th he had refitted and provisioned his troops and started on his return march, crossing the Chickahominy at Jones's Bridge. He did not know where the Army of the Potomac was at this time, and the problem of reaching it again was somewhat perplexing. He knew that reinforcements from the south had reached Richmond, and that these might be used to intercept his march. He sent to Fort Monroe for a pontoon bridge on which to cross the Pamunkey River, and then sent Gregg and Wilson with their divisions to destroy a railroad bridge over the South Anna River at Cold Harbor.

Finding that the railroad bridge near White House Landing had been only partially destroyed, he reconstructed it. He got the material for this by sending out his men, who each brought back a board or plank for flooring, and in one day it was ready for use. On the 22d the forces that he had sent out under Gregg, Wilson, and Custer had returned, and then the whole command crossed the river on the reconstructed bridge, and rejoined the Army of the Potomac at Chesterfield Station, on the 24th of May.

Sheridan had accomplished all, and more, than he had promised. In the fifteen days of his absence he had destroyed railroads, bridges, and munitions of war, and had helped Grant's army by so disconcerting

Lee that he was forced to make a retrograde march, thus enabling the Union army to move its great trains unmolested by the enemy. He had, moreover, inflicted an almost irreparable defeat on the enemy's cavalry. The loss of Stuart, its commander, was a terrible blow for Lee, who said, "I can scarcely think of him without weeping."

Grant and Meade were profoundly satisfied with what Sheridan had accomplished; while he, on his part, had demonstrated the correctness of his views in regard to the use of the cavalry, so that there were no more disagreements with Meade as to the proper method of its management. During this expedition, with clear insight of his surroundings in the midst of dangers and uncertainties that shook strong hearts, Sheridan showed that spirit of undaunted courage and confidence which marks a great leader of men.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE FIGHT FOR COLD HARBOR

WHEN Sheridan again joined the Army of the Potomac, the twelve days' terrible conflict that had centered around Cold Harbor had been fought and Grant, by a series of complicated movements, was swinging his great army across the North Anna River.

Both armies were disappointed at the results of the fighting since Grant had crossed the Rapidan River. The Confederates who had been accustomed to see the Army of the Potomac fall back after every indecisive battle, had hoped, or expected, that Grant would follow the example of its former commanders. But Grant was not the kind of general to turn back and go home after an uncertain conflict. He was, however, disappointed at not gaining greater results; for the twelve days' battle before Spottsylvania convinced him that the position of Lee, as defended, was impregnable; and that to deal his antagonist a crushing blow he must adopt other tactics. It was, however, significant to his mind, that Lee no longer cared to come out from behind his defenses and give battle on equal terms.

Baffled in his earlier purpose, Grant now began a turning movement by a flank march to the left. Wilson's division of Sheridan's cavalry was sent to the right flank of the army to shield and protect the

infantry, and to hold the fords left behind on its march south.

While Wilson was thus engaged, Sheridan, with Torbert's and Gregg's division, shielded the crossing of the army over the Pamunkey River, near Hanover Town. To do this in the face of a vigilant enemy was difficult, for if the Confederates knew where the Army of the Potomac was to make the crossing they could gather such a force on the opposite side as to make it impossible to cross without a battle. My readers may be interested to know how the Union army was shielded, or covered, and the enemy deceived, so as to make the crossing of this great army possible and easy.

Sheridan sent Torbert's division to Taylor's Ford and Gregg to Hanover Town Ford, and these were followed by Russell's division of infantry. At these points they made a great parade as though about to make a crossing there. Then, when night came, leaving a small force still to guard these fords, they marched back to Hanover Town and, after driving away about a hundred of the enemy's cavalry, the crossing was successfully made, and by the 28th the whole army was on the south bank of the Pamunkey River.

After this, General Grant, being very uncertain where Lee's army was and what it was doing, asked Sheridan to find out by making a reconnaissance. With this in view Sheridan sent Gregg's division to Haws' Shop, and when about a mile beyond he found the Confederate cavalry behind a breastwork of rails,

logs, and earth. As soon as possible Gregg dismounted his men and attacked. The fight was very sharp and stubborn, for he had encountered the two cavalry divisions of Hampton's and Fitzhugh Lee's, and also Butler's brigade of South Carolina mounted troops armed with long-range rifles. The fight continued until late in the evening. Sheridan sent Custer to help Gregg; and after a desperate fight they captured several parts of the enemy's intrenchments. But the Confederates still persisted in fighting for the position, since Lee desired to hold it to protect the roads to Richmond, while he marched his army to the Tolopotomy River.

Grant having, meanwhile, discovered the value of this place as a protection to his new base of supplies at the White House, and also as a direct route to Cold Harbor, was equally desirous to possess it, and therefore an obstinate effort was made by both the Confederates, and the Union troops under Sheridan. Finally, late in the evening, Custer on foot formed in rear of Gregg's division and attacked the enemy through an opening which had been made near the center, while the other two brigades attacked and captured their intrenchments.

The Confederates, seeing they were beaten, retreated, leaving their dead and wounded in the hands of the Union troops, and also a number of prisoners, from whom it was learned that Longstreet's and Ewell's corps were but a few miles in the rear. The battle was a severe one, and took place almost in sight of some of the Union infantry that were throw-



ing up intrenchments to hold the place. The Confederate five brigades outnumbered Sheridan's three brigades, and he thought that he should have been assisted by the infantry close at hand. This action not only gave Grant the crossroads at this point, but also revealed to him the fact that Lee was moving his army by the right flank and still interposing between him and James River.

This will illustrate to my readers that when a general cannot gain information of his enemy's purpose in any other way, he has to fight to get it.

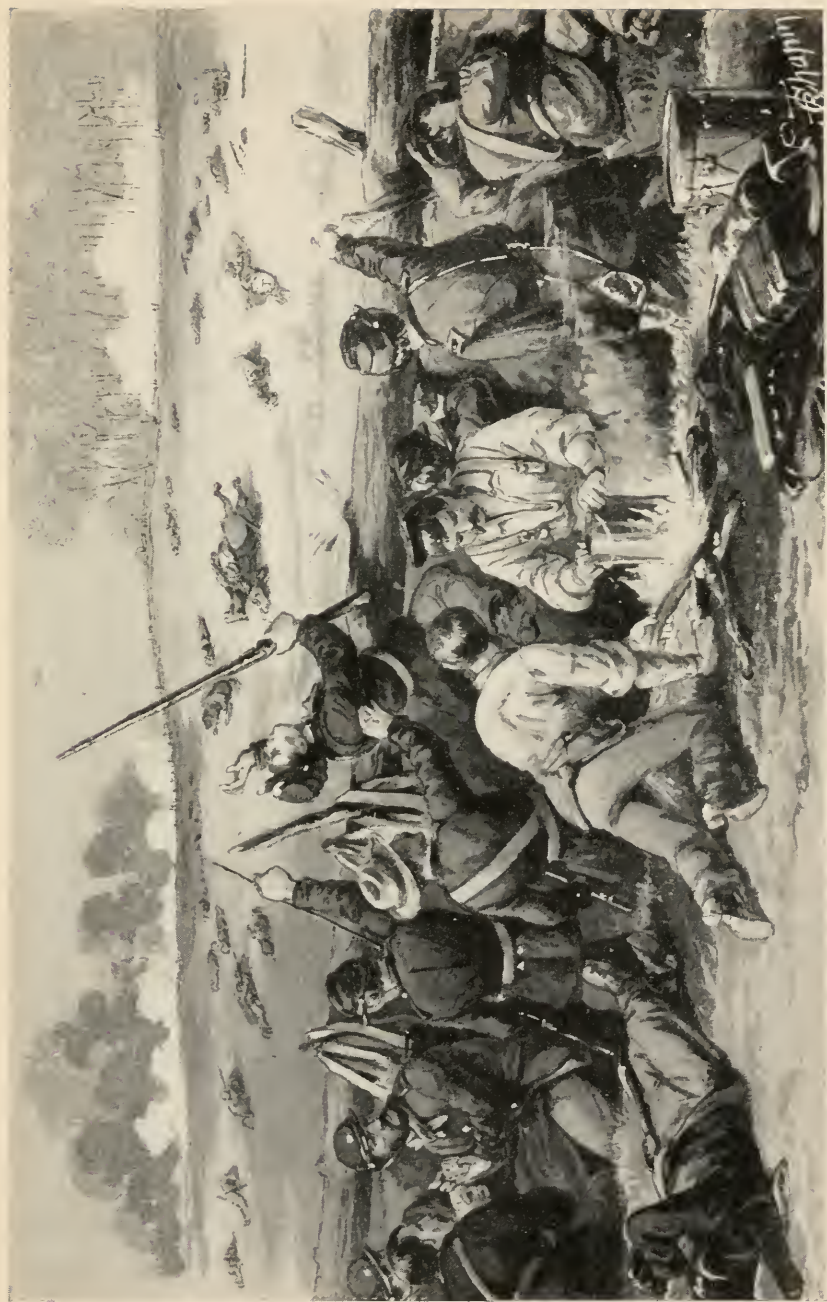
After the battle, waiting only to bury his dead, Sheridan marched all night, reaching a place called Old Church in the morning. Here, pushing his pickets towards Cold Harbor, he discovered that the Confederates were occupying it with a considerable force. Grant realized that it was necessary to occupy Cold Harbor, not only to secure his communications with the supplies at White House, but also to disguise the fact that his troops were marching towards James River. It was also a point from which many roads radiated, not only to different crossings of the Chickahominy River, which were absolutely indispensable to Grant, but to other important points. The Confederates also realized its importance, as by its possession they constantly endangered Grant's trains as they passed to and from the White House conveying supplies to the Union army.

When Sheridan, from his position at Old Church, discovered the Confederates at Cold Harbor, some sharp fighting took place, each side dismounting and

stubbornly contesting the ground. Finally Sheridan sent Merritt's and Custer's brigades into the fight, when the enemy fell back and were pursued within a mile of Cold Harbor, on the Old Church road.

On the morning of the 31st, in conference with Torbert and Custer, Sheridan formed a plan to capture Cold Harbor. With this in view he sent Merritt's and Custer's brigades on the road direct to Cold Harbor, while Devin's brigade was sent by a road at the left to get in rear of the enemy's lines. When the whole division got into line it was confronted by Fitzhugh Lee's cavalry, supported by an infantry brigade, behind an improvised breastwork of logs, rails, and earth. These opened a heavy fire at once upon Sheridan's cavalry, and it seemed impossible to dislodge them from the position, for Gregg's division had not arrived. The fight went on with varying success for a while, when Merritt, with the First and Second Cavalry, got around the Confederate left flank and attacked his rear, while the remainder of the division attacked them in front. Exposed to a fire in front and rear, the Confederates broke and retreated, and Sheridan was in possession of their works. He then moved forward on the Bottom Bridge road, and Cold Harbor was in his possession.

He at once sent word to Meade that he had captured Cold Harbor, but could not hold it, as the Confederate infantry, under Hoke, were marching on that point. During the night he withdrew his division, but was scarcely on the road before he got word from General Meade to *hold the place at all hazard*. He at



BEHIND THE ENTRENCHMENTS, COLD HARBOR.



once reversed his march and, before the enemy had discovered his absence, again reoccupied the place. His men at once availed themselves of the breastworks of logs and rails built by the Confederates, reversed them in some places, strengthened them in others, or moved them so as to take advantage of the ground. When these intrenchments were made as strong as circumstances would permit, the ammunition boxes were taken from the carriages and ranged conveniently for supplying ammunition to the force along the breastworks. The men took their places and word was passed along that the place *must be held*.

Before daylight Kershaw's division of Confederate infantry marched up with confident step and began an attempt to drive them out by moving against Sheridan's right flank from Bethesda Church. They were confident because they knew that the force holding the position they were about to assail was "nothing but cavalry." Their confidence was misplaced, for Sheridan, a host in himself, was behind the frail barricade, directing the fight. He instructed his men to hold their fire until the Confederates were close up to the intrenchments; then an awful fire from his horse artillery and repeating carbines made the enemy break in confusion, leaving their dead and wounded to mark the terrible repulse they had received. Again they tried to take the position, but with less confidence, and were easily driven back. After this second repulse Sheridan was left undisturbed, and he sent the following dispatch to army headquarters, dated June 1st, 9 A. M.:



“General: In obedience to your instructions I am holding Cold Harbor. I have captured this morning more prisoners; they belong to three different infantry brigades. The enemy assaulted the right of my line this morning, but were handsomely repulsed. I have been very apprehensive, but General Wright is now coming up.”

About ten o'clock in the morning the Sixth Corps relieved Sheridan, who then sent out Torbert and Davis to cover the left of the infantry, where they remained until, in the afternoon, Hancock's corps took their place. Then he took a position on the north side of the Chickahominy River near Bottom Bridge, where he remained until June 6.

## CHAPTER XV

### BREAKING LEE'S COMMUNICATIONS

WHILE Sheridan was resting his cavalry at Bottom Bridge, the battle of Cold Harbor had been fought by Grant. This assault, which was made on Lee's intrenched lines June 3, 1864, was Grant's one great mistake. He lost at this time nearly six thousand of the flower of his army,—seasoned veterans who could not be replaced by raw recruits. In his "Memoirs" Grant deals himself this severe criticism: "I have always regretted that that last assault at Cold Harbor was ever made. . . . No advantage whatever was gained to compensate for the heavy loss we sustained." In agreeing with this candid acknowledgment, we are apt to lose sight of his motives for fighting that battle. Both the right and left wings of Lee's army were practically unassailable, and it was contrary to Grant's resolute nature to go to the south side of James River without one more attempt to destroy Lee's army north of Richmond. He knew that the task was difficult; it proved to be impossible.

When convinced of this, Grant determined to continue the turning movement to the south side of James River. This movement was a dangerous one and hampered by many obstacles; for Lee held an interior line from which he could cover all the roads to Rich-

mond with his infantry, leaving his cavalry free to hinder and spy out the movements of Grant's army on the south bank of the Chickahominy.

In view of this dangerous situation, Grant resolved to send Sheridan on another raid, not only for the purpose of drawing off the Confederate cavalry, but to disconcert and hinder all of Lee's operations by destroying his communications. We are now about to tell how this was done and how Sheridan acquitted himself in doing it.

On the 5th of June Sheridan received the following instructions from Meade: "With two divisions of your corps you will move, on the morning of the 7th instant, to Charlottesville and destroy the railroad bridge over the river Anna near that town; you will then thoroughly destroy the railroad from that point to Gordonsville; and from Gordonsville towards Hanover Junction, and to the latter point if practicable."

After receiving these instructions, Sheridan received from General Grant verbal instructions, and a letter to General Hunter, who was operating from the Shenandoah Valley,—instructing the latter to advance as far as Charlottesville. The two commands were there to destroy the James River Canal, the Virginia Central Railroad, and then rejoin the Army of the Potomac.

On the 7th of July, taking Gregg's and Torbert's divisions, Sheridan started out on his adventure of arms. He carried with him a train of canvas pontoons, in other words frames over which canvas was to

to be stretched for boats, with "balks" or string pieces, which were to be placed five each from boat to boat, and "chess," as the planks for flooring of the bridge are called. Each cavalryman carried for himself three days' rations, and on his saddle two days' short forage for his horse.

After he had crossed the North Anna River and was marching along its north bank, Sheridan learned from some Confederate soldiers whom he had captured, that the enemy's cavalry had left the south side of the Chickahominy and were marching toward Gordonsville, and also that Breckinridge, of their infantry, was on his way to that place, moving by the road parallel to Sheridan's line of march.

On the evening of the 10th Sheridan bivouacked about three miles from Trevillion Station; while Hampton, with a cavalry division, had encamped about three miles north-west of the same place and Fitzhugh Lee's division was about six miles from that place. So, as my readers will see, the cavalry of the two armies were drawing together for the inevitable conflict. The Confederates had separated their forces, Hampton on one road and Fitzhugh Lee on another, with the purpose of uniting later. This, in a wooded country, is generally risky, and especially so with a watchful enemy, like Sheridan, before them.

On the morning of the 11th, while advancing on the road to Trevillion, Sheridan encountered the pickets of the enemy, and, driving them before them, Torbert's division came upon the Confederates, under Hampton, in some thick timber behind intrenchments

extending across the road for some distance. Meanwhile Sheridan had instructed Custer to take a road through the woods to the left, to get in the rear of Hampton's cavalry. In doing this Custer got sandwiched between Fitzhugh Lee and Hampton, without knowing it. When, however, he had got in Hampton's rear, he captured the station, and a large number of horses, wagons, and caissons, and sent them to the rear; in all about three hundred and fifty men and their horses were among the captures. Meanwhile Fitzhugh Lee, while attempting to join Hampton's cavalry, came upon the wagon train and took all that Custer had captured from Hampton, except the prisoners, besides some of Custer's own wagons, including his headquarters' wagon, in which was his colored cook, Eliza, or as the men called her, the "Queen of Sheba."

When one of his guns was captured his artilleryman told Custer that he thought the "rebs" intended to keep that gun. Custer, in a great rage, exclaimed, "They sha'n't do it!" and leading a charge he re-captured it and had it dragged away by hand.

Custer had so cut up and disconcerted Hampton, that the latter sent Rosser's brigade to fight him. This brought Custer between two fires, Fitzhugh Lee's and Rosser's, and there ensued a desperate struggle for the possession of the captured teams, wagons, and other property.

When Sheridan heard the quick *pop, pop, crack, crack*, of carbines and rifles that announced the presence of Custer in Hampton's rear, he directed Torbert



with his division and a brigade of Gregg's to attack. This drove Hampton back to Custer's lines, and the latter took his revenge for the injuries which we have recounted, by capturing about five hundred of Hampton's men, while the rest got off in disorder to the west of Trevillion Station before their commander could rally them. This defeat of the rebel cavalry left Sheridan in undisturbed possession of the Station, the Confederates being so disunited that they did not effect a junction of their scattered forces until next day at noon.

After tearing up the railroad track for some distance, Sheridan, well satisfied with his day's work, encamped for the night. The next morning, June 12, he ordered Gregg to destroy the railroad to Louisa Court House, and the work was continued all day.

Learning by this time that General Hunter was marching from instead of towards him, Sheridan saw that it was impracticable to form the junction desired by Grant; he therefore determined to return to the Army of the Potomac as soon as possible, having performed all that was contemplated, except that part given verbally by the Commander-in-Chief. With this in view he sent Torbert out on the Gordonville road to find a direct route for his return march. About a mile out Torbert came upon the Confederate cavalry intrenched across the fork of two roads, one of them leading to Charlottesville. The concentration of the Confederate force at this point obstructed the shorter route, by way of Mallory's Ford, by which Sheridan

wished to take his corps back to the Army of the Potomac.

Torbert sent one of his brigades to an open field to attack the left of the enemy's position, while his second brigade was held in reserve. The fight began, but Torbert, outnumbered, had all and more than he could attend to; for with Hampton in front and Fitzhugh Lee on his right the coveted road, when night came, was held by the enemy.

Though Sheridan might by a battle next day gain the road, yet it would consume the ammunition he had left and he thought it not prudent to fight another battle. So, when night came, he gave orders to withdraw.

General Sheridan reported his losses in this battle as 575, and of this number 490 were wounded. Hampton's report shows that he lost in killed, wounded, and missing 612.

On the night of June 12 Sheridan began his return march to Grant's army by the same road on which he had come. He took with him all the injured that could be moved, leaving his most desperately wounded under care of one of his surgeons, with plenty of food and medical stores. On the following morning they halted at Carpenter's Ford on the north side of the North Anna River, where they unsaddled their horses and let them graze; for the poor animals had had neither food nor water for two days. Late that afternoon they continued their march and proceeded to Twyman's Store. He learned, meanwhile, that the Confederate cavalry, under Hampton, was moving

down the south side of the North Anna to intercept their return to the Army of the Potomac. The march was resumed on the 14th, when they reached Shady Grove Church; and on the following day they passed over the old Spottsylvania battleground. Here, in the neighboring houses, they found many wounded Union and Confederate soldiers, of whom they brought away all that were able to travel.

Nothing could exceed Sheridan's solicitude for the wounded. His tender care for both Confederates and his own men was constant, and was marked by all who were with him. Though his heart seemed adamant in battle, he was as pitying as a woman when wounded men came under his charge. He utilized every kind of conveyance for their comfort, from ordinary army wagons, to family carriages, decrepit buggies, and gigs. His own headquarters' wagon was turned over by him to his medical director, that there might be ample conveniences to treat the wounded.

His prisoners were a great burden for him to feed and guard; but when some one suggested that he parole them and let them go, he said, "In that case it might be hard to convince people that we have taken any prisoners."

The difficulty of feeding those in his charge was complicated by about two thousand "contrabands," as the negro slaves were called, that had joined them from time to time with bundles that seemed to contain all their earthly possessions. They had joined him in the belief that freedom and the "day of jubilee" lay in his path, or at least was ahead where Sheridan was

going, and he had not the heart to turn back these poor people who had put their trust in him.

He had heard nothing about the Army of the Potomac, except rumors from Southern sources, since starting out, and therefore did not think it prudent, encumbered as he was with prisoners and his wounded, to pass between the Mattapony and Pamunkey rivers. He therefore marched down the north bank of the Mattapony to Queen's Court House, where he learned that the Union depot of supplies at the White House had not been abandoned and that supplies for him were waiting there. So, sending his prisoners, contraband followers, and the wounded to West Point on the York River under escort, he bridged the Mattapony with his pontoons and crossed at Dunkirk to the south bank.

The weather was hot and the roads were dusty; but no longer encumbered with the prisoners, wounded, and colored contraband followers that had made their marches short and slow,—for the trains had stopped often to refresh the wounded as well as to make it easy for those afoot,—he marched speedily forward to White House on the Pamunkey River. While on the march he received intelligence that the place was about to be attacked. But a party that he had hurried forward previous to this time sent back word that he had better not push his jaded horses, as the crisis would pass, in any case, before he could arrive.

Arriving at White House he found the enemy on the surrounding hills, but they were soon driven away. A small force of invalid soldiers and colored infantry

was here, commanded by the brave General Getty, who was on his way to join his command. While here Sheridan got orders to break up the White House station and bring the trains to Petersburg. All being in readiness, he began his march with nine hundred wagons in charge, on the 14th of June. That night the train was parked on the south side of the Chickahominy, guarded by the men mentioned as under the command of the veteran General Getty.

Torbert pushed out to secure the crossing at Jones's Bridge, when, on the 23d, he was attacked and driven back; but Getty came to his help and drove the Confederates in turn.

Sheridan had been ordered to cross James River at Deep Bottom, where there was a pontoon bridge, and the route by which he was to march would carry him by Harrison's Landing, Charles City Court House, and Malvern Hill. The enemy held nearly all of this ground from the Chickahominy, except the crossing itself; and so, encumbered with an immense train of five hundred wagons, his route was strewn with difficulties.

Hampton, believing that Sheridan intended to cross his trains at Bottom Bridge, concentrated most of his force except one brigade, which he planned to throw across Sheridan's path on the river road. Guessing at his purpose, Gregg got his men behind hastily constructed barricades in readiness to fight. The storm came at about four o'clock in the afternoon, when Hampton assailed Gregg along his whole line. He sent back word to Sheridan, but the messages did not



reach him until darkness came. Meanwhile, becoming convinced that he could no longer hold out, after getting his led horses and wounded on their way, stubbornly resisting, Gregg retreated until Hampton gave up the pursuit. His brave fight against superior numbers had saved the trains, though his losses were heavy, and he was obliged to abandon his dead and desperately wounded.

It looked as though the task of saving the trains was hopeless, for, as we have already hinted, all the Confederate cavalry would be thrown across the path while on its way.

Meade seemed to have divined this, and sent a ferryboat to convey Sheridan across James River, while the trains were moved back to Douthard's Landing and brought across the James in the same manner.

When at last, on the 29th of June, the cavalry crossed the James and went into camp, a little rest seemed in store for them; but instead Sheridan was ordered to go to the relief of Wilson who, it will be remembered, had been left behind to act as an infantry auxiliary. He was returning from a raid he had made on the Confederate railroads south of James River, when he met an overwhelming force of the enemy. But Wilson escaped from the network of enemies and returned to the Union army before Sheridan could reach him.

The final operations of the cavalry, previous to Sheridan's being sent to command in the Shenandoah Valley, were brilliant. It participated in a coöperative movement by a force under General Hancock, by pass-

ing the Appomattox and taking two hundred and fifty prisoners at an affair called the Battle of the Point of Rocks. This service completed his work with the cavalry corps of the Army of the Potomac.

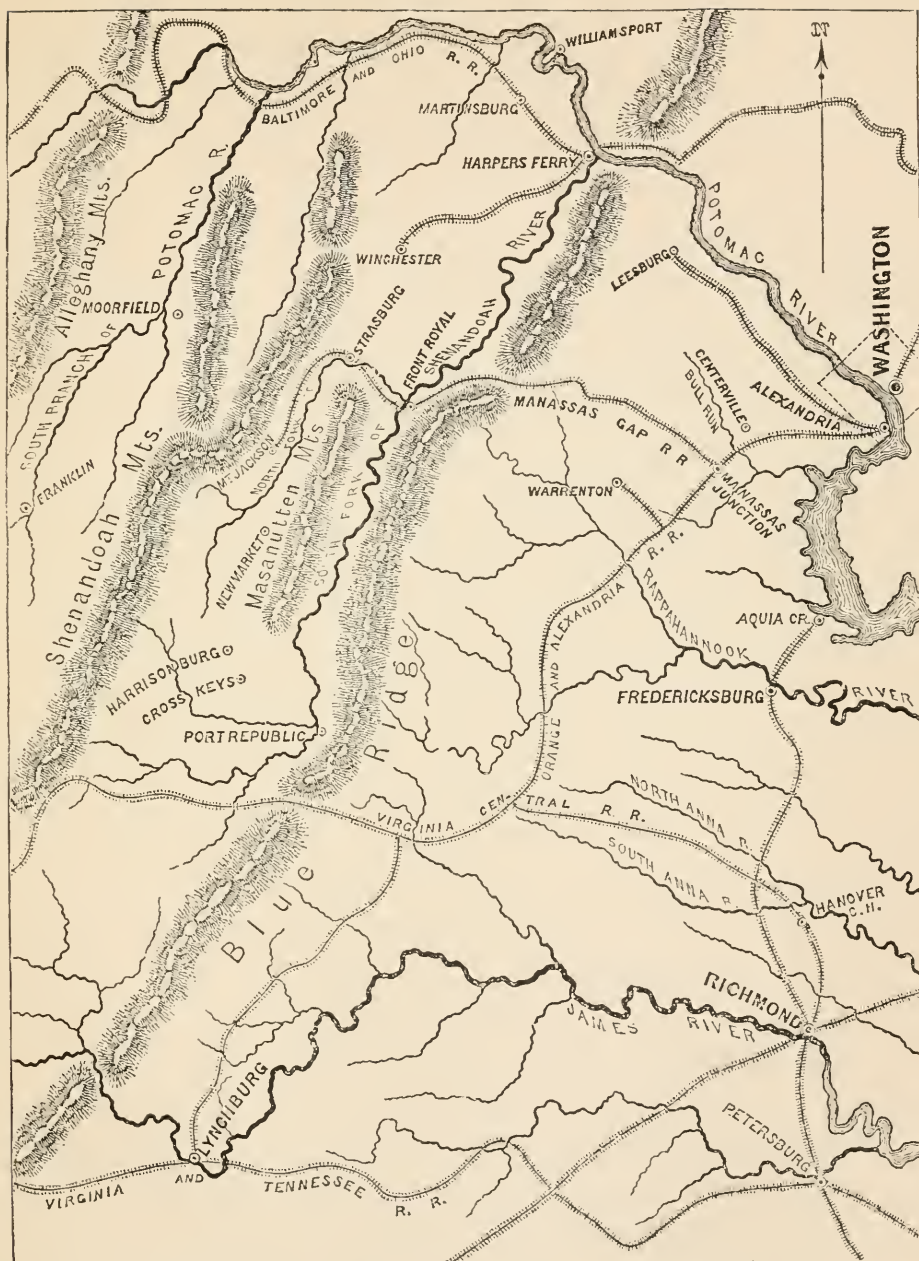
Sheridan had found the corps a subject of derision, a mere appendage performing the duties of an auxiliary force to infantry. He had converted it from videttes and guards into a conquering army of horsemen, a mobile and effective force having confidence in itself and in its great commander. From being a subject of derision it had become, under him, a powerful, admired, and respected arm of the service; he had lifted it from degradation into a place of power.

## CHAPTER XVI

### SHERIDAN LEADS AN ARMY INTO THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY (August, 1864)

AFTER the dreadful losses at Cold Harbor the Army of the Potomac and that of Northern Virginia took a breathing spell, in order to plan and prepare for fresh struggles. Grant moved to the south side of James River, where he began to invest Petersburg and to send out troops to cut off the railroads on which Lee depended for supplies. Lee, as well as Grant, was well shielded by earthworks, from which he made frequent sallies for the defense of his "life line," for an army can fight only so long as it can be fed. Grant also decided that he would, once and for all, put an end to the danger that constantly threatened his army from the Shenandoah Valley.

The rivers of Virginia east of the Blue Ridge flow in a southeasterly direction, and an overland march to Richmond meant that each river had to be forded, a difficult and dangerous thing for an army to do in the face of an enemy. But west of Blue Ridge the Shenandoah River flows northerly, falling into the Potomac at Harper's Ferry. This valley, accessible by numerous gaps in the Ridge, not only made the easiest kind of highway between Virginia and the North, but it was a rich farming region capable of



THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY.





yielding abundant supplies to the Confederate army; and it was defended, at first, by the famous Stonewall Jackson, whose home it was and who knew every inch of the ground.

Again and again during the war a Confederate force had dashed up the Shenandoah Valley, menaced Washington, threatened to invade the North, gathered a train of plunder for the Confederate army, drawn off the Union army from its advance on Richmond, and then scurried back to Lee's army before any effective pursuit could be made. A large force had to be withdrawn from the Union army to guard this Virginia highway, and several generals had suffered defeat there. If the Shenandoah Valley could be closed against raiders Grant could give his entire attention to moving against Richmond and Lee's main army.

So late as May, 1863, General Siegel, commanding the Union army in the Valley, had been defeated and Grant and Halleck were dissatisfied with him. General Hunter, a veteran soldier, was appointed in his stead. He moved forward with great energy and defeated the Confederates under General Jones at Piedmont, June 5, and then marched to Lynchburg. But Lee, recognizing the vital importance of this place to the Confederacy, hurried forward reinforcements, and Hunter had no choice but to retreat by way of Kanawha instead of up the Shenandoah Valley. This left the Valley undefended, a situation by which the Confederates were prompt to profit. And when Lee found himself held in the clutches of Grant's army before Petersburg, and the Valley undefended, he

sent General Early through the Valley to threaten Washington, hoping that the alarm of the people and government would compel Grant to withdraw a large force from his front.

Early crossed the Potomac and levied a contribution of one hundred thousand dollars on Hagerstown, Maryland. Consternation prevailed among the people; men, women, and children, with droves of cattle and wagons filled with their household goods, thronged the roads. On the 11th of June Early arrived in front of Fort Stevens, which guards the outer portals of the National Capital. He was about to advance on the fort when, to his dismay, he learned that the Sixth Corps from the Army of the Potomac had arrived for the defense of Washington. A severe battle, of which President Lincoln was a spectator and in which 280 men were killed and wounded on the Union side, took place in sight of the city; but at night, after being defeated, Early withdrew his troops and was soon across the Potomac again.

Grant had not been long in command of the Army of the Potomac before he discovered the importance of the Shenandoah Valley; that it was not only a protected lane through which the Confederates could pass to assail the states of Maryland and Pennsylvania and the National Capital, but that it supplied to Lee's army a large part of its subsistence as well as feeding the army operating there. He grimly determined to cancel the valley henceforth from the map of future operations, not only by driving out Early's army but also by destroying its mills, livestock, and whatever

else would feed or sustain an army there. With this firm purpose in view he looked over his forces, to select, if possible, a general who would be able to perform a task which had tried to the uttermost every other soldier who had fought in this difficult field.

General Sheridan possessed the entire confidence of his chief. He was bold, enthusiastic, and daring, without being rash; cool, far-seeing, and energetic in execution; painstaking in detail, yet broad and comprehensive in his planning; he had an eye for topography telescopic in its breadth and microscopic in its details of perception. He seemed to carry in his memory and mind a map of the country, with all its details, for his use in campaigning. It had not been luck or favoritism that had brought him to the attention of Grant, but victories honestly earned in every position, however difficult, in which he had been called to act. In war, it is true, success is the criterion of merit; but success can only be gained and held by real ability. And so it was that Grant chose his young chief of cavalry for a service which had so far baffled every commander by whom it had been tried.

At first neither the President nor Secretary Stanton had been willing to permit that three geographical districts should be consolidated and put under Sheridan's command; but the success of Early in bringing war to the very defenses of Washington led to their agreeing to it, in substance, when they accepted Grant's proposition that Sheridan should command all the forces in the field that were to operate against Early.

On the 4th of August Sheridan arrived in Wash-

ington and got orders to report to General Grant at Monocacy Junction, whither he had gone from City Point. Before reporting to Grant, Sheridan called on the President with Secretary Stanton, and in substance the following conversation took place:

"General Sheridan again," said Lincoln, heartily extending his hands. "You are going to take the job of whipping Early, General Grant tells me. Most of those who have so far got into the Valley to fight have bitten off more than they could chew; but I sincerely hope that you will do the job."

"I shall do all I can," said Sheridan, modestly, "but I hope, and am sure, I shall get the hearty support of you and the Secretary of War."

"Well," said Mr. Lincoln, candidly, "Stanton and I both thought, at first, that you were too young for such a command; besides, we didn't like to have three important departments consolidated into one; but Grant has plowed around that difficulty by having you put in command of all the boys in the field fighting against Early. I feel satisfied with what he has done, and hope for the best."

Mr. Stanton, meanwhile, did not express himself one way or the other; but after leaving the White House he said to Sheridan: "I hope you see the importance of your appointment, General Sheridan. It is of great consequence that you should succeed."

"I shall do my best," said Sheridan, "as I always have."

On August 6 Sheridan met Grant, as arranged, and received his instructions, which, in substance, were:

“Concentrate all your available force in the vicinity of Harper’s Ferry. . . . If the enemy has but a small force north of the Potomac, then push south the main force and detach a sufficient force to look after the raiders and drive them to their homes. . . . There are now on the way to join you three other brigades of the best cavalry, numbering at least five thousand men and horse.

“In pushing up the Shenandoah Valley, as it is expected you will have to go first or last, it is desirable that nothing should be left to invite the enemy to return. Take all provisions, forage, and stock wanted for the use of your command. Such as cannot be consumed, destroy. It is not desirable that the buildings should be destroyed—they should rather be protected, but the people should be informed that so long as an army can subsist among them recurrence of these raids must be expected, and we are determined to stop them at all hazards.

“Bear in mind that the object is to drive the enemy south.”

From his conference with General Grant Sheridan went at once to Harper’s Ferry. Here, with Lieutenant Meigs, the chief engineer officer, he first made a study of the maps of the country in which he was to operate. His singular ability to learn the topography of a country enabled him quickly to fix in his mind every important road and stream and all points of note west of the Blue Ridge. Meigs’ intimate knowledge of even the farmhouses was readily imparted and quickly absorbed by Sheridan.



He began by massing his army in front of Harper's Ferry. His infantry force comprised the Sixth Corps, commanded by Major-General H. G. Wright; one division of the Nineteenth Corps, commanded by General William Dwight; two divisions of West Virginians under General George Crook, who had not only been a classmate of his at West Point but a boy friend before either entered the Military Academy. Torbert had been made chief of the cavalry corps, and General Wesley Merritt had been placed in command of the first cavalry division, which was a part of Sheridan's force. In all, his force numbered about 26,000 men.

Sheridan was as anxious as either President Lincoln or General Grant to "put himself south of the enemy;" and though, in the end, he gained his successes over Early by a front attack, he was always hoping to get in his rear and there fight a battle. "I will strike Winchester," he said, "which is the key, and pick up the parties on the north side of the Potomac."

On the 10th of August, with the cavalry guarding his flanks, he started out from Halltown to take up a line between Clifton and Berryville. Early was not to be caught napping but, suspicious of Sheridan's intentions, fell back through Winchester with Sheridan pursuing until he came to a halt and took up a strong defensive position behind earthworks which extended across a narrow valley between Massanutten and North mountains. Lee was about to send reinforcements to him, and Early had asked to have these reinforcements, consisting of Kershaw's division of in-

fantry and Fitzhugh's cavalry from Lee's army, join him by way of Port Royal.

When Sheridan learned of this it gave him great anxiety, since his real effective force for battle was only about 22,000 men. About this time he got a dispatch from Grant informing him that two divisions were on their way to reinforce Early and urging him to be cautious and act on the defensive, until he had compelled Lee by heavy fighting to withdraw a considerable force from the Valley. In obedience to this warning Sheridan examined his maps for a defensive line, but could find none short of Halltown; all others invited flanking movements from an enemy. So he reluctantly retraced his steps, destroying as he went mills, forage, and grain, and taking with him all the mules and horses that he found, according to Grant's instructions, with which he heartily agreed; "For poverty," says Sheridan in his "Memoirs," "brings prayers for peace more quickly than does the destruction of human life."

On a high hill that almost overhung the town of Strasburg the enemy had a signal station from which could be seen every movement made by Sheridan. This gave an advantage in following up the Union army as they fell back. When Sheridan learned that Merritt had been attacked by Kershaw's division at the crossing of the Shenandoah River, he saw that he had fallen back none too soon; for though Merritt had captured three hundred prisoners and two battle flags, the attack confirmed the intelligence that Early was being reinforced from Lee's army.

Sheridan's retrograde movement caused great alarm in the North, for it was expected that Early was again about to invade Pennsylvania and Maryland or march on Washington; and there were even those who clamored for Sheridan's removal from his command.

On the 22d of August the Confederates moved close to Sheridan's defensive position at Halltown. At one time he thought and hoped that Early was about to cross the Potomac again, and he left the way "open for him," as he wrote Grant. For, leaving Anderson to disguise his movement, Early had moved to North Shepardsstown, dealing Torbert a rough blow on his way. Custer had been able to save his division of cavalry only by crossing the river. Sheridan seized the Gap of the South Mountain, prepared to get in his rear if he should advance on Washington.

Sheridan was prudent and resisted the temptation to attack; but no doubt he was chafing all this time to be unleashed. About this time Grant telegraphed him that in view of the heavy fighting that had taken place near Petersburg for the Weldon Railroad, he believed Lee would ask Early to return the troops that he had sent him. "Watch closely," he said, "and if you find this theory correct, push with all vigor."

August 28th Sheridan moved forward again; but it was simply or principally for a reconnaissance to find out whether Early had abandoned his projected movement into Maryland, if he had ever seriously contemplated such a thing.

Merritt having taken possession of a bridge which threatened to interpose a force between Early's right

and left flank, Early attacked him to recover the bridge. A severe fight took place in which Merritt was driven back with considerable loss; but as the forces neared Sheridan's infantry lines, a division was sent to Merritt's help, the Confederates were driven back, the bridge retaken, and the Smithfield crossing held by Lowell's brigade.

The next morning Sheridan sent his cavalry, under Merritt and Torbert, to Berryville. This alarmed Early, and as Averill's cavalry was creating some havoc in his rear, he recrossed to the west side of the Opequan River, massed his troops so that he could protect Winchester, and at the same time tried to break the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.

While Sheridan was moving his infantry, Anderson had started on his way to return to Lee's army; but on his way to cross the Blue Ridge at Ashby's Gap he blundered upon Crook's lines at Berryville, and a severe fight took place, which resulted in Early's deciding to retain Anderson with him for some time. But for this encounter Anderson would have gone back to Lee's army and Sheridan would have attacked Early sooner than he did by a fortnight.

All this time Sheridan was constantly vigilant and busy preparing for a final battle. Lowell in his letters to his wife gives us a picture of him, when he writes in substance as follows: "He seems never to sleep, is never out of temper, and he works like a mill owner, as though he had a personal interest in his work. You can't report too often to him. If he doesn't succeed, he deserves to!"

As a defensive movement the campaign was now evidently ended. Sheridan, however, skirmished with his cavalry so as to maintain a space of about six miles' width between the two armies, so that, when ready, he could get his men into position for a surprise attack upon Early.

The Union general, not satisfied with the information of the enemy that he had thus far received from doubtful citizens and Confederate deserters, now originated a new force of scouts. These were made up from among his own men, and were formed into a battalion commanded by Major H. K. Young of the Second Rhode Island Infantry. He disguised these men, when occasion required, in Confederate uniforms, and they were paid from the secret service fund. From them he learned that an old colored man, who was loyal and true, had a written permission to go into Winchester twice a week to sell vegetables. He also learned from General Crook that a school-teacher, by the name of Rachel Wright, was a devoted loyalist, and might aid Sheridan by giving information about the Confederate troops. So Sheridan wrote a letter, which he concealed in tin foil rolled up in shape of a bullet, and sent it to her by this colored man. In this letter he said: "I learn that you still love the old flag. Can you give me the position of Early's army and its strength?"

Miss Wright was very much alarmed when she received this message, for she knew that if it was known that she gave information to the Union commander her life would be worth little. But she loved the



Union, her father had died in a Southern prison for the cause, and this love overcame her fears. She wrote a reply, which was wrapped in the tin foil in which Sheridan's letter had been sent, so that it could be concealed in the mouth of the old colored man who took it to Sheridan. In this letter she said: "I have no communications with the rebels, but I will tell you what I know. The division of General Kershaw and Cutshaw's artillery . . . have been sent away, and no more are expected, as they cannot be spared. . . . I will take pleasure hereafter in learning if I can of the strength and position, and the bearer may call again."

When this message from the brave Union girl reached Sheridan, giving him just the information that he wanted, he knew that the hour to strike had come. He had resolved to throw forward his whole force the next day to fight Early, when a message was received from Grant asking Sheridan to meet him at Charleston, whither he was coming to see him. Before starting Grant had drawn up a plan of campaign for Sheridan, but he found him so confident of success and so clear and positive in his views, that he said nothing about it. "I saw," he said, "that but two words of instruction were necessary; those were, GO IN."

In the following chapter I shall show how Sheridan went in and won not only a great battle, but the commendations of Lincoln and Grant, and caused the loyal North to rejoice.

## CHAPTER XVII

### SENDING THE ENEMY WHIRLING

GENERAL GRANT, as has been said, found Sheridan's knowledge of affairs in the Valley so accurate and his confidence in success so great, that he at once authorized him to attack Early whenever and wherever he thought best.

If Sheridan's opportunity was great, the need of action was also great. To those who had not understood the reason for Sheridan's comparative inactivity, it looked, as President Lincoln said, as if "Sheridan and Early were facing each other at a deadlock." The condition of the public mind was very nervous and uncertain. A presidential election was at hand; the apparent inaction of Sheridan's army for two weeks had begun to excite criticism from the newspapers; and the enemies of Lincoln's administration were using it as an argument for a change of administration. It was feared that the defeat of Lincoln would mean the defeat of the cause for which so much blood had been shed. For it was one of the hopes of the Confederates that the election of a Democratic administration would give them peace on their own terms,—and those terms were an acknowledgment of their independence, the breaking up of the Union.

The need of action was intensified by other small considerations, such as the long-continued interruption of traffic because of Early's hold on the Ohio and Chesapeake and the Baltimore and Ohio railroads, which created such a dearth of coal that the gas companies of Baltimore and Washington might be compelled to stop their works.

Sheridan, from his interview with Grant, went to work at once on his preparations for battle. While thus engaged, he learned that Early was moving two divisions of his infantry toward Martinsburg. This gave him an opportunity to strike while his enemy was divided, unless Early could reunite his divisions by forced marches.

As the reader knows, Opequan Creek was between the two armies, four or five miles west of the Union army, and was jealously guarded by Early. Two of his divisions, as we have said, were ten miles north of Winchester and isolated from the rest of his army, which occupied the hills and plains covering that city. It was Sheridan's intention to strike Early's divided army in detail,—in other words to defeat one part of it before the other could come to its assistance.

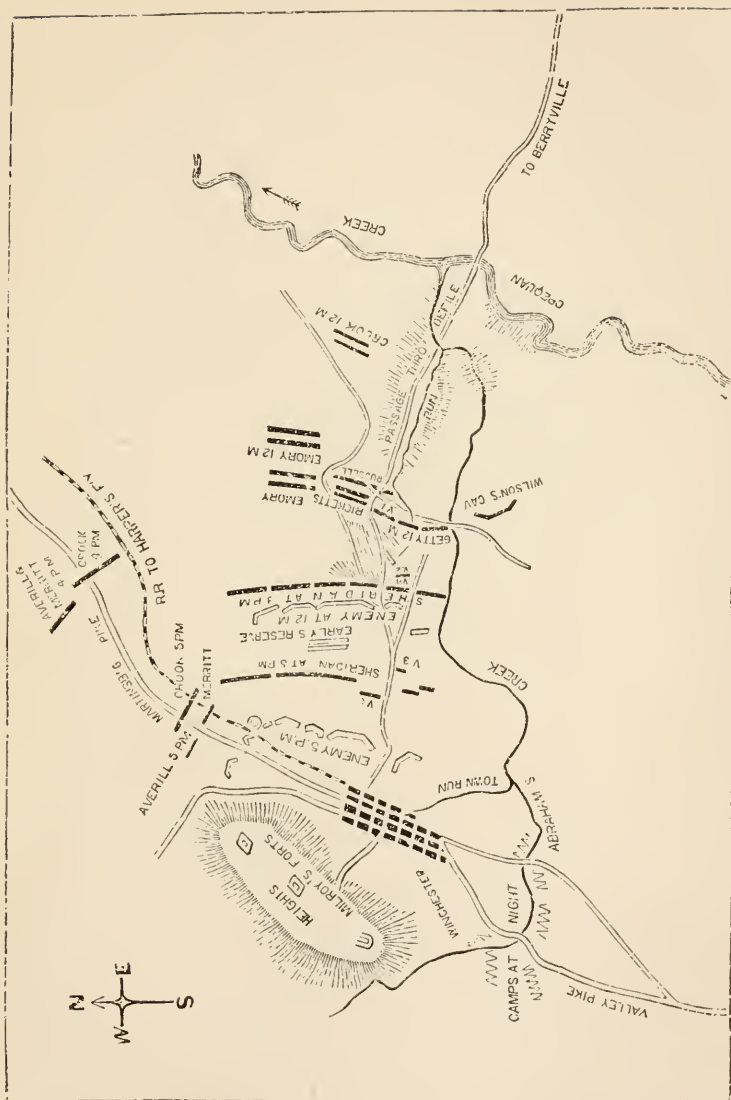
At three o'clock on Monday morning, September 19, Wilson with his cavalry, by a quick dash through a gorge, captured a small earthwork which he obstinately held until the arrival of the infantry. The Sixth and Nineteenth corps had followed Wilson in the order named.

Opequan Creek is below the level of the surrounding country, and the road on its further side is, for a

mile or more, on a level with that stream, which winds through a long, crooked, wooded ravine through which Wilson had attacked. As the Sixth Corps began to file out of this ravine, lined with Wilson's wounded cavalymen, they found that Sheridan had already preceded them. With his headquarters on an elevation, he was superintending the placing of his troops. Though at that time there was no particular enthusiasm for him, their impressions gained by the way he had so far handled his troops was favorable, yet both officers and men expressed great satisfaction when, at that early hour, they found him at the front, keenly attending to details which they had been accustomed to see intrusted to staff officers. The infantry of the Sixth Corps at once relieved the cavalry and formed, facing west. The direction of Sheridan's advance brought his attack full upon Early's isolated right.

At first everything seemed favorable to surprising the Confederates and fighting them when divided. But a vexatious delay unfortunately occurred, caused by the wagon trains of the Sixth Corps and Wilson's cavalry blocking the Winchester and Perryville turnpike. This delayed the march of the Nineteenth Corps for over two hours and gave Early time to hurry up his forces and unite them to ward off the threatened disaster. While the Sixth Corps confronting the enemy, wondered that no more troops appeared, the cavalry was transferred to the south side of Abraham Creek.

It was almost noon before the Nineteenth Corps



## PLAN OF BATTLE OF THE OPEQUAN.





reached its place and was formed in three lines on the right of the Sixth. Almost any other general, upon finding his plans spoiled, would have waited another day to elaborate new plans before giving battle. But Sheridan was not made of such dilatory stuff; he had come out to fight, and fight he would, in full confidence that he could beat the enemy on any fair field. So new plans were made on the spot, and this was now the formation for battle: On the left the Sixth Corps, its flank protected by Wilson's cavalry; in the center, the Nineteenth Corps; the Kanawah infantry on the right, covered by a division of Merritt's cavalry.

It was nearly noon when the signal gun was fired and the men sprang to the ranks. Instructions had been given to the advance of the Sixth Corps that the direction of attack was to be by the road. As the men of the Sixth rushed forward, their ranks were disordered by underbrush and small trees. When they emerged from these entanglements and saw the ground over which they were to attack, its difficulties were such that their stout hearts almost failed them. For a quarter of a mile before them the ground sloped to an irregular and winding ravine, as far as they could see. Beyond this was a steep hillside, the Confederates in force holding the crest, ready to sweep them away with musketry and artillery as they approached. The advance halted and threw themselves on the ground to avoid the bullets that whistled around them. At the farther side of the hollow, if it could be reached, the hill was so steep that it gave cover to pro-

tect those who could get there, from the fire of the enemy above them.

After some waiting the men sprang to their feet, their alignments were corrected, and then, at the top of their speed, they ran forward into the hollow. From the bottom of this marshy depression they could see the steep slopes which they were to ascend covered with small evergreen trees, and on the right a regiment or more of the enemy, ready to deliver an enfilading fire on their ranks as they passed. To retreat was as dangerous as to advance, but these brave men had no thought of falling back. So, floundering through the marsh, they rushed up the hill until the survivors—for many were shot—reached that part which was so steep that they were in part sheltered from the enemy above them. There getting their breath and correcting their alignments, they rushed forward to the crest and captured the Confederate breastworks, sending to the rear as many prisoners as there were men in the division that had made the charge. This was on the left of the Union lines, and considerable ground was gained; but a desperate resistance on the right of the line showed that the time lost by the delay of the Nineteenth Corps had enabled Early to concentrate his troops in a connected line of battle.

While the attack which I have faintly described was taking place on the left, the second division under Grover had attacked with decided success, defeated, and driven before him Gordon's Confederate division. But in pursuing the enemy a gap in the lines was made,

which the gallant Keifer with a small brigade, tried in vain to fill. At this moment the Confederates struck this weak line and checked Sheridan's advance, driving back Ricketts' division and a part of Grover's.

Sheridan was on the field and ordered Russell's reserve division to charge. The charge was a gallant affair, led by both Russell and Upton. It struck the Confederates with a shock that drove them back to their original ground. This success enabled Sheridan to reestablish his line, and the regiments that had been broken by the attack of Gordon's infantry were reformed in rear of Russell's compact lines.

This success had, however, been gained at a terrible loss, for the brave Russell, who was loved by his troops, was killed and the gallant Upton wounded, while the loss of the division had otherwise been heavy in men and officers. Russell's death, especially, occasioned great sadness. He had been Sheridan's captain and friend in early army life and his loss was a personal grief. But soldiers have no time to mourn in battle, for all other thoughts than those of victory are crowded out in the intensity of the conflict.

Two hours passed while Sheridan was rearranging his lines, issuing fresh ammunition and getting ready for a grand turning movement and a front attack, at the same time. For this purpose he placed Crook on the right of the Nineteenth Corps, with instructions to push his men forward when the battle was begun, as a turning movement in conjunction with the Nineteenth Corps, while Wright swung the Sixth Corps to the

left in a half wheel, in concert with Crook's movements.

While this was taking place, Sheridan got word that Torbert's cavalry was driving the enemy in consternation and confusion along the Martinsburg road. This was what he was waiting for. Feeling that he now had Early in his grasp, he rode with terrible speed along the whole length of the skirmish line, without heeding the storm of bullets which cut the air around him, crying out to the men, "Crook and Averill are on their left and rear, and, by George, men, we've got 'em bagged!"

The order came to advance. The line of blue, with flags fluttering all along the ranks, swept forward like a mighty wave with a crest of glittering steel. "As terrible as an army with banners" was no metaphor: it was a living reality along that wall of blue. The line reached within easy musket shot of the enemy, with the artillery rattling up close behind,—closer than veteran soldiers ever before saw it in a fight. For it was Sheridan's expressed wish that the artillery should have their part in the work of the day.

"The enemy contested the ground in front with great obstinacy and courage. Crook had swept around Gordon toward the right of the Confederate line held by Breckinridge as a protection for their rear. The ground was open in front of Breckinridge, and Torbert drove Fitzhugh Lee before him until, in the shelter of Breckinridge's ranks, he attempted to make a stand. Then Torbert, taking advantage of the open ground, charged with such momentum as to break the



Confederate left, while Averill was passing in its rear. Meanwhile Merritt's brigades, under the brave Custer, the devoted Lowell, and the brave Devin, literally rode down the Confederates, taking a battery of guns and 1200 prisoners.

Pressed on flank and front, the Confederates withdrew into some old fortifications in front of Winchester in a vain attempt to hold back the Union advances. They bravely received and endured the heavy fire for a while, and then the soldiers of the Sixth and Nineteenth corps saw them break and melt away. Then the left of the Confederate line rushed in mad confusion past the Union left. The cavalry pursued and caught up with the mass of fugitives, capturing flags, cannon, and thousands of prisoners. The whole infantry line, seized as with a common impulse, in a circling crescent rushed joyfully forward with tumultuous shouts and cheers of victory. The enemy attempted to rally, but soon fled precipitately up the Valley pike, a disorganized and defeated mob.

Up to this time, the tired soldiers had found no time to eat during the day, and they brought sharp appetites to their evening meal. While they were thus engaged, Sheridan rode by; and many of the soldiers of the old Army of the Potomac, who had not cheered a general since McClellan had commanded them, rose simultaneously to their feet with cheers that came from their very hearts.

The cavalry pursued the enemy for a while; but they had been afield since early morning, and the pursuit was abandoned when darkness fell.

Sheridan's losses in this battle were nearly five thousand, 4500 of whom were killed and wounded. He had captured five pieces of artillery and nine battle flags.

This unheralded and unexpected victory was received all over the North with an outburst of enthusiasm by the people and the press. Sheridan indited a dispatch which told, in soldier-like phrase, the result of his day's battle: "*We have just sent them whirling through Winchester and we are after them to-morrow!*" This phrase was soon repeated through every village and city of the North. Grant, rejoicing, fired a salute of one hundred shotted guns in honor of the great victory. President Lincoln wrote Sheridan a letter of personal congratulation, in which he said: "Have just heard of your great victory. God bless you all, officers and men. Strongly inclined to come up and see you. A. LINCOLN."

Sheridan did not forget his obligations to Miss Wright, the little Winchester school-teacher who had given him information that had decided him to strike Early. He visited her and thanked her, writing at her desk the dispatch which I have quoted. She was fearful that the Confederates would learn that she had given the information and would kill her. Sheridan replied, "Never fear; the rebels will never come here again." Years afterwards, when it was known that she had given this information, Union men of Winchester took her hand and said, "Why, my little girl, there was not a man in the place who would have dared do such a thing." After the war, in 1867,

when Sheridan commanded the Department of the Gulf, he wrote to her sending her a gold watch and chain, saying: "I shall always remember this courageous and patriotic action of yours with gratitude, and beg you to accept the watch and chain, which I send you by General J. W. Forsyth, as a memento of September the 19th, 1864."

The battle of the Opequan had been fought with mathematical precision, or, as has been said, "like clockwork." It was one of the first battles in which cavalry, infantry, and artillery were used systematically together. Its effects on the public mind were to give renewed confidence to the defenders of the Union; it freed the Shenandoah Valley from Confederate control and the soil of Maryland and Pennsylvania from invasion; while the National Capital was never again to be insulted by an enemy.

It was Sheridan's first independent command and demonstrated his ability as a great captain.

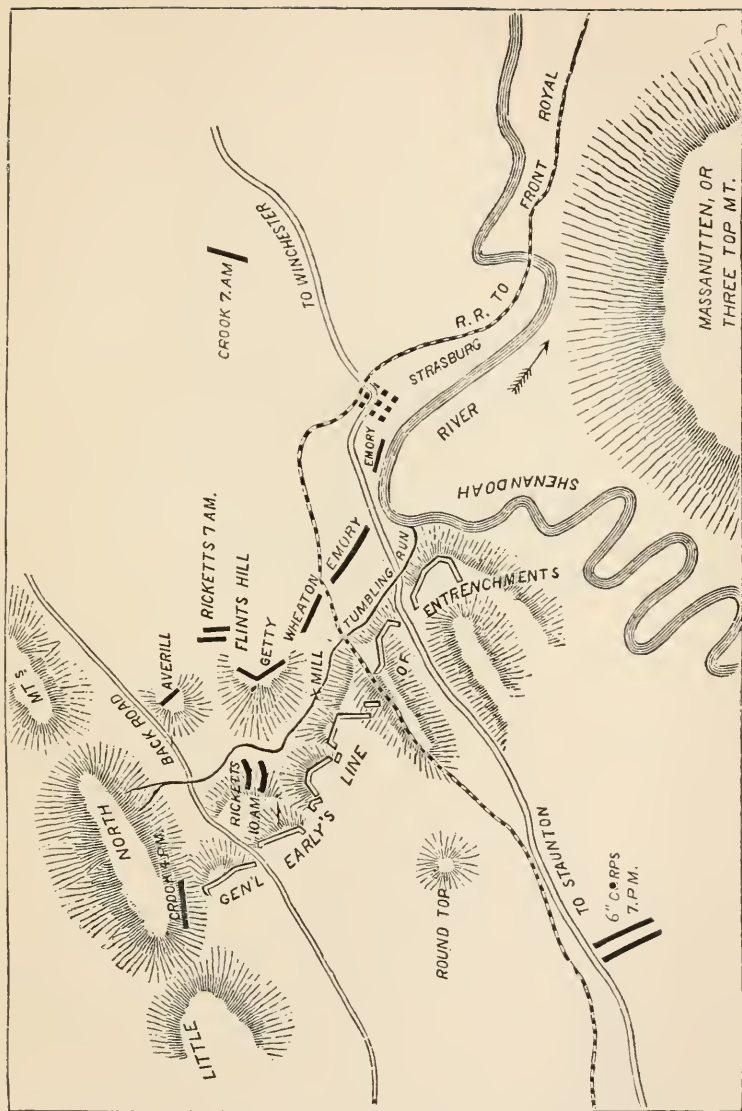
## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE BATTLE OF FISHER'S HILL (September 22, 1864)

THE morning after the battle of the Opequan, or, as the Confederates called it, the battle of Winchester, Sheridan set his troops in motion before daybreak to pursue Early's army. The enemy had continued their retreat all night, and during the day the Union troops met with no resistance until they were brought to a halt at Fisher's Hill, two miles south from Strasburg, where Early had established his army.

The magnificent Shenandoah Valley at this point narrows from a breadth of twenty miles to five miles. The Shenandoah River here winds along the eastern base of the mountains, while a line of hills follows the windings of a little mountain stream known as Tumbling Run, and stretches across the country from the Shenandoah to the Little Mountains of the Blue Ridge.

Late in the afternoon of September 20, Sheridan's infantry came into line in sight of these hills, and a few cannon shot announced that they were in front of the enemy. Early had established his army on these hills, with his right protected by the mountains and the right fork of the Shenandoah River, while his left was posted at the base of Little Mountain, in a position that at first glance looked so formidable as to be safe from attack. Let my readers bear this posi-



PLAN OF BATTLE OF FISHER'S HILL.



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tion in mind, for it was the key-point which Sheridan attacked and where he gained a victory as complete as it had seemed impossible.

Here the Confederates had placed the dismounted cavalry commanded by Lomax, who had thrown out guards or pickets on the hill as far up as they thought a goat could climb. His right wing, under Wharton, rested on the Shenandoah River and the mountains, while the space between right and left was filled by Gordon's, Ramseur's, and Pegram's divisions of infantry. Fitzhugh Lee's cavalry was in the Luray Valley to guard against an attack on Early's right. This last position was fortunately chosen by Early for, as will be seen later, it was the means by which his army was saved from a still greater disaster than finally overtook it.

To the soldiers from the Army of the Potomac, who had participated in many battles, the enemy's position looked impregnable. High and commanding hills rose on their front, crowned with earthworks and armed with artillery. The ravines, which were blocked by fallen timber, were further guarded from attacks by abattis and rifle-pits filled with veteran soldiers, brave and tried in battle. Fisher's Hill itself is a steep hill overhanging Tumbling Run. This position had been selected by Stonewall Jackson in the early days of the war as the strongest in the Valley, and was fortified and used by him as a rallying place when outnumbered, or hard pressed by his enemy, or as a place from which to sally forth to attack them.

No wonder that the old soldiers said, when viewing

the enemy's position, "What is little Phil going to do about this?" The Confederates regarded it as a haven of rest. To attack them in front the Union troops would have to cross Tumbling Run and assault the apparently impregnable positions on the hills. Once before, readers will remember, Sheridan had been in front of this position, and then marched away. But at that time he was held in check by Grant's instructions; now he was free to use his own discretion. One thing was evident, and that was that bravery alone could not give Sheridan victory.

At break of day on the 21st Sheridan rode the entire length of the lines, studying the enemy's position, and after hours of careful consideration made such plans as gave the Union a brilliant victory without its usual cost of blood. He began marshaling his divisions in order, posting the Sixth Corps on the right and the Nineteenth Corps on the left, covering a front of three miles or more,—seizing, while under fire, such protection as he could for his army. The Confederates were, meanwhile, busy with axes and shovels strengthening their position by digging more rifle-pits and falling trees. They were so well assured of the security of their lines that they had dismounted their ammunition boxes from the caissons.

The difficulties of the situation seemed to make our little general all the more determined to overcome them. The morale of his army, that indefinable quality made up, in part, of confidence, faith, and hope, was high. The successes so far gained had given to it a buoyancy of spirit and a confidence in it-

self and its commander that added to its efficiency in a wonderful degree. The Confederates, on the other hand, had lost faith in Early's leadership and in themselves in a direct ratio as the Union troops had gained confidence in the generalship of their commander. Confidence, or the want of it, are things that must be reckoned with in an army, as much as guns and bayonets.

While Sheridan was viewing the Confederate lines, he found them occupying an eminence called Flint Hill on the north, or what might be called the Union side, of Tumbling Run. "We must have that hill," he said, "and put some guns there." It was a good point for observation, as well as a good place for his artillery. In any case, it would not do to leave the enemy in possession of so formidable a place on the north side of the Run. A part of Warner's brigade of the Sixth Corps was ordered to attack the position, but the enemy also understood its importance and defended it so stubbornly that the first attack failed. Then the whole of Warner's brigade, composed of stalwart Vermonters, among the bravest and most tenacious fighters of the army, went to the attack. They advanced to the assault at about sundown and drove the Confederates from the hill, but not without a loss amounting to more than the total of the casualties of the army on the morrow.

That night the position so gallantly won was heavily intrenched on the front of the hill curving to the rear. When morning dawned the Confederates were, from this position, in plain view a half mile

across Tumbling Brook. In a short time Sheridan, and some of his generals, among them Crook and Wright, rode up with their staffs and orderlies. Here a telescope was put in place on a tripod and the country was examined right and left. After Crook had taken a survey of the country, he held a hurried conversation with Sheridan and rode off to execute the task which Sheridan had given him,—a task which the reader will soon see was the most important one of the day.

After the other generals had left, Sheridan was still examining through his powerful glass the enemy's lines, and he was heard to say to his staff, "I'll get 'em! I am going to get a twist on 'em!" and utter other confident expressions. But how was he going to do it? Neither by a desperate assault in front nor by gradual approach was it to be attempted; but the Union general was resolved on turning the left flank of the enemy, posted at the formidable hill that we have already viewed. But how was this to be accomplished? It must be a secret move, and how was this to be made, when the Confederates, from a hill just in their rear which was a natural watch-tower, could see every part of the Union lines and the roads and turnpikes as far as Winchester, except the woods that here and there concealed or masked the ground. General Crook, to whom the task had been intrusted, had concealed his men in these woods and then, when Sheridan gave the command, had moved silently and secretly to his work of turning the flank of the Confederates on yonder distant and difficult mountain.





THE ASSAULT ON FLINT HILL.

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While Crook is on his circuitous route to strike their flank, let us see what Sheridan is doing to engage the attention of the Confederates. He began by moving his men by degrees further to his right, placing Ricketts' division of the Sixth corps on the extreme right, hardly a half mile from the enemy's lines. This division swept over the ground in grand display, driving before it the enemy's skirmishers and halting at an oblique angle to the general line. This occupied the instant and concentrated attention of the Confederates, who began with renewed energy throwing up stronger defenses to resist from this quarter an expected flanking attack. They believed this to be Sheridan's extreme right flank and supposing that Ricketts' was the turning column, neglected to observe the vital point to which Crook was secretly moving. Still further to carry this conviction to the enemy, Sheridan had directed Averill to picket his cavalry on a bare hill near by, as though they were so placed in order to take part in such a movement.

Many of the Union soldiers had now become aware of what was contemplated by Sheridan. They could catch an occasional glimpse of flashing muskets in the woods that masked Crook's line of march as it pursued its long, circuitous journey. The march was made with admirable stillness and secrecy, and every precaution was taken to keep out of sight and hearing of the ordinarily watchful Confederates. During the night they marched by road or open fields, but by day they were kept in concealing woods.

It was near sundown when Crook's men had

climbed the steep hill and reached the right position. Then, like an avalanche, they swooped down on the unsuspecting Confederates and were upon them, over their works, in their rear, and on their flank before they realized what had happened. It was as surprising and sudden to them as lightning from a cloudless sky. On Crook swept, without pause and with resistless vigor, upon defenses that but a moment before it had been believed impossible to reach.

As Crook's men swept down like an eagle from some mountain height, taking the intrenched lines of the Confederates, Ricketts, driving the astounded enemy before him, joined his lines with those of Crook to complete the turning movement. Then the whole Union line, taking advantage of the paralyzing effects of the movement, swept across Tumbling Run, up the steep hills, over rocks and fallen trees and entangling impediments that it would have seemed madness to attempt but an hour before, driving the Confederates from their intrenchments in disorderly rout. Sheridan and his staff were all along the line urging on the pursuit, shouting, "Go on! Go on! Forward men! If you can't run, yell at the top of your voices!" And on they went, with a headlong rush impossible to describe, but which readers can imagine if they recognize the exaltation of men under the excitement of a great success, when almost impossible obstacles are overcome.

"My whole force," said General Early in his report to Lee, "retired in considerable confusion." If he had said "consternation" it would have described

their flight more accurately. Nor were these brave Confederates greatly to blame; for soldiers, suddenly attacked on the flank without time to make new dispositions, can make little resistance; they are driven into masses and cannot fire without shooting each other. Sheridan had counted on the effect that the sudden appearance of Crook on their flank would have on troops that had been recently defeated, as the Confederates were a few days before at Opequan. The attack was a wedge which, when driven home, shattered and scattered the enemy in consternation and defeat. Before darkness came all the positions held by the Confederates but an hour before were captured, and with them sixty cannon, a thousand prisoners, and many battle flags.

The Confederates fled under cover of darkness four miles beyond Woodstock, Sheridan pursuing all night with his cavalry. Torbert, who had been left, as we have before said, in Luray Valley for the purpose of cutting off the enemy's retreat, not knowing that the Confederates had been defeated at Fisher's Hill, did not act with spirit or promptness. Finding the enemy in a strong defensive position at Milford, he did not succeed in driving them from their intrenchments, and so that part of Sheridan's plan failed.

It was not until the afternoon of the 23d that Torbert learned of Sheridan's victory at Fisher's Hill and got instructions to march up the Luray Valley. Had he moved on the 22d through Massanutton Gap, he would have been in the rear of the enemy when they were retreating after their defeat. But Early had



guarded against this by placing Wickham's force in such a strong defensive position that Torbert did not think it prudent to attack. If he had executed his part of the plan that Sheridan had made, the whole Confederate army would have been captured or destroyed.

Sheridan's loss in this battle, by which he captured the strongest position in the Valley, was scarcely four hundred men.

During the night following the battle Sheridan found time to write Grant: "I have the honor to announce that I have achieved a signal victory over the army of General Early at Fisher's Hill to-day. I found the rebel army posted with his right resting on the north fork of the Shenandoah and extending along the Strasburg Valley west towards the North Mountain, occupying a position which appeared almost impregnable. After a good deal of maneuvering during the day, General Crook's command was transferred to the extreme right of the line on North Mountain, and then furiously attacked the left of the enemy's line, carrying everything before him. While Crook was driving the enemy, . . . sweeping down behind their breastworks, the Sixth and Nineteenth corps attacked the rebel works in front, and the whole army appeared to be broken up . . . . Only darkness has saved the whole of Early's army from total destruction."

The wonderful day at Fisher's Hill is one of the most brilliant victories of Sheridan. To the thinking old soldiers who participated in this campaign, its

careful, well-considered plan showed more military genius than any of his other battles in the Valley. For several days they had faced the Confederate intrenchments, wondering if it were possible to dislodge the enemy from so formidable a position; and to see it done without great loss commanded their admiration. They have always applauded this victory, for they could understand its difficulties. The plan was matured in a short time and was as original as it was effective.

To show that I do not exaggerate this victory, I will quote from General Wright's report: "The annals of the war present, perhaps, no more glorious victory than this. The enemy's lines, chosen in an almost impregnable position and fortified with much care, have been most gallantly carried by assault, capturing most of his artillery, a large number of prisoners, and sending his army on the run in the most disorderly manner,—and all this from the impetuosity of the attack, with an absurdly small loss on our part." The battle was in keeping with Sheridan's general principles in fighting; that is, to achieve as great results as possible with as little loss of life.

This battle is but little dwelt upon by historians because there were so few losses; but this we consider its greatest glory. The overwhelming victory of Fisher's Hill was the result of great generalship rather than of stubborn fighting at the expense of human life. It proved that Sheridan was not only an impetuous fighter, and the impersonation of warlike energy, but that he was also versed in tactics and strategy, and

with a fiery zeal controlled by unusual discretion. The enemy, hitherto deemed almost invincible in their tactics in the Valley, were broken almost as much in spirit as in their ranks; while the reverse was true of the Union army, which had been converted to the belief that General Sheridan was an invincible commander of men, who was to be followed and obeyed implicitly.

## CHAPTER XIX

### LAYING WASTE THE VALLEY

ON the morning of September 23, after a night's pursuit urged on with fiery zeal by Sheridan, the advance of the Union army was halted at Woodstock, twelve miles from Strasburg. A supply train, reaching there almost as soon as the infantry, was welcomed by the soldiers as one more proof of Sheridan's thoughtful care for their comfort. While resting his troops here he learned with surprise that Averill, commanding one of his cavalry divisions, had taken no part in following up the enemy. When at about noon that general came up, the chief sent him forward to assist Devin, who with great spirit had with his cavalry attacked the enemy at Mount Jackson and driven him from his position.

As Averill, even under these advantageous conditions, failed to accomplish anything and was about to retire from the Confederate front, Sheridan was indignant and sent him this characteristic message: "I do not want you to let the enemy bluff you or your command, and I want you distinctly to understand this note. I do not advise rashness, but I do desire resolution and actual fighting." Even this drastic reproof had no effect; and when, a short time afterwards,

Sheridan learned that Averill had actually withdrawn his men from the front and gone into camp, he relieved him from his command, appointing Colonel W. H. Powell in his place. This failure of Averill's to attack Early gave the latter valuable time in which to collect his scattered forces.

Sheridan could not tolerate officers who were dilatory, and whose failures to move with spirit endangered success. He understood, better than most generals, the value of time in campaigning; he wanted prompt action on the part of his generals and, so far as it was in his power, would have it. It was this disposition, as we shall see in coming pages, which led him to relieve General Warren from his command in the final campaign that ended at Appomattox. A soldier must act instantly and often must give vehement impulse to action, if he would succeed, and to this marked characteristic of Sheridan's must be attributed not a little of his success.

Sheridan was now not simply trying to defeat, but to capture, Early's army. He had for this purpose ordered Torbert to advance in such a way as to bring him in the rear of Early. A few miles beyond Mount Jackson, Early had deployed his army in a strong position, and a little way beyond his lines could be seen the road, winding down the mountain, by which Torbert had been ordered to come from the Luray Valley to take the Confederates in the rear. But after the enemy had passed Newmarket, all hope that Torbert would get in their rear was abandoned.

Early left the Valley pike and took the road to



Keezletown,—a road that not only facilitated his junction with reinforcements expected from Lee, but which, by a rugged ridge that rose on one side of the road, gave his flanks protection. At Brown's Gap he halted to await the arrival of Kershaw's infantry and Cuttshaw's artillery, which had been ordered to rejoin him. He was joined the next morning by his cavalry from the Luray Valley, also Lomax's from Harrisonburg. His whole army then fell back, and by the morning of the 25th wholly disappeared from the Union front.

During the day several prisoners were captured, among whom Sheridan recognized a former comrade who had served with him as a lieutenant in Washington Territory. The poor fellow was hungry, worn, and discouraged. For the sake of the comradeship of other days the general took him to his headquarters, fed him well, and made him comfortable until a batch of prisoners was sent to the rear, when he was sent with them.

When the Sixth and Nineteenth corps reached Harrisonburg, they encamped; while the cavalry, with the exception of Merritt, who was sent to Port Republic, went forward to Waynesboro by way of Stanton to destroy the railroad bridge. They had succeeded in its partial destruction when they were attacked by Wickham's cavalry and a Confederate division of infantry. This caused them to fall back to Spring Hill, destroying supplies and gathering in cattle as they marched. About this time Merritt's cavalry ran into Kershaw's division, that was on its way to join Early,

and being sharply attacked, retreated to Cross Keys.

It was near Harrisonburg that Sheridan's engineer officer, Lieutenant Meigs, was murdered while out with two assistants making a survey. Riding along the road, Meigs overtook two men dressed in the uniform of Federal soldiers. Not suspecting that they were otherwise than what their dress indicated, for they were within a mile of Sheridan's headquarters, he rode along with them until they suddenly turned upon him and killed him without giving him a chance to surrender, or without resistance of any kind. One of his assistants made his escape and reported the facts to Sheridan. Ever since the Union army had come into the Valley every train or isolated guard had been bushwhacked by the people, and Sheridan now determined to teach them a lesson that would end the practice. The fact that this murder was committed within his lines was evidence that the murderers had their homes there, or that they had been harbored by the people, and so he ordered all the houses within a circuit of five miles to be burned. After a few houses near the place of the murder had been burned, however, he countermanded the order. Such orders may seem cruel; but a general must protect his soldiers, and to Sheridan it was evident these men were Confederates who had been on a secret visit to their homes or to friends in that neighborhood and it was these facts that prompted him to take the stern measures recorded.

While at Harrisonburg, Sheridan determined it

would not be good policy to pursue Early beyond the Blue Ridge into Eastern Virginia, although Grant advised this should be done. Sheridan with his usual prudence argued that such a move would include the rebuilding the Orange and Alexandria Railroad; that many men must be left to guard this road from raids and to keep it in operation; that another large force must be left in the Valley to guard the Baltimore and Ohio Road; and that so many men left for special duty would so weaken his army as to defeat their main object. For these reasons he thought the project of following Early beyond the Blue Ridge not a wise one, and said so emphatically.

Sheridan never quarreled with his superiors,—except in the instance we have given of his misunderstanding with Meade,—but he always gave his opinions boldly and then let the decision rest with his commander. He wrote to Grant that he thought the campaign should end by destroying all provisions that would invite a return of the Confederate army, and then that he should unite his forces with the main army before Petersburg.

Grant, while seeing the force of Sheridan's views, was affected by considerations outside of purely military ones. A pressure of public sentiment at the North was one of these, as well as the wishes of those in control at Washington. But finally, as Sheridan was on the spot, and because Grant had confidence in the soundness of the general's judgment, he left him to decide what it was best to do.

On the 6th of October Sheridan began his return

march down the Valley with his cavalry, following his infantry, stretched from the Blue Ridge to North Mountain, burning mills, crops, and barns, but sparing dwellings. Clouds of smoke, filling the air from mountain to mountain, told that the whole country was being made a waste and untenable for the Confederate army, which had hitherto drawn so much of its subsistence from this fertile region.

Early had, meanwhile, been reinforced by Lee, so that his army was stronger than at any time since the battle at Winchester. He had been told by the Confederate commander-in-chief that he must if possible defeat Sheridan, and his desire to retrieve his own reputation made him alert. So, when he saw that Sheridan was marching down the Valley, he followed in pursuit. Remember that "down the Valley" was northward.

No enemy was seen by the Union army, but the question of supplies had become quite serious. There was not transportation enough in the Department to convey full supplies to them at so great a distance from their base, and guerillas were attacking every train that passed to them through the Valley.

A new Southern cavalry leader, General Rosser, who had had some successes elsewhere, had come from Richmond, ambitious to distinguish himself. He and his followers had been decorated with laurels at Richmond and were styled the "Laureled Brigade." Great things were expected of them, and they proclaimed Rosser as the "Saviour of the Valley." The rear of Sheridan's army was soon attacked and harassed by them, and Sheridan, somewhat annoyed by

their audacity, called a halt of his army to finish off this new Confederate hero. He said to General Torbert, "I want you to go in and whip this blusterer, or get whipped; and I am going to stay and see you do it."

A spirited fight took place. The country being open and favorable to cavalry evolutions, the combatants fought on horseback and with the saber. At first the "Laureled Brigade" met their foe with great stubbornness and courage; but finally they gave way, right and left, and fled with ridiculous haste, so that even the Southerners were afterwards known to refer to that battle (Tom's Creek) as the "Woodstock Races," and to joke about Rosser's somewhat rapid and inglorious flight. Of this battle Torbert reported, "The cavalry covered themselves with glory, and added to their long list of victories the most brilliant one of them all, and the most decisive the country ever saw." Three hundred and thirty prisoners and eleven cavalry guns were captured and about "everything the rebels had on wheels," including ambulances, caissons, and the headquarters' wagons of all the generals.

In his letter to Grant, reporting this battle, Sheridan said: "I directed Torbert to attack at daylight this morning and finish this 'Saviour of the Valley.' The enemy . . . broke and ran; they were followed by our men on the jump twenty-six miles through Mount Jackson and across the North Fork of the Shenandoah. I deemed it best to make this delay of one day and settle this new cavalry leader." Some of the horse artillery that was captured was fresh from the



foundry at Richmond, and some wag had labeled it, "To General Sheridan, care of General Early."

The moral effect of the battle of Tom's Creek was very great; it broke the spirit of the Confederate cavalry in the Valley, and influenced the fighting of the cavalry in Lee's army in the final campaign in a marked degree. The battle also had its effects on the action of the Union cavalry at Cedar Creek, where it showed great staunchness and spirit.

On the 10th Sheridan continued his march until he reached the north side of Cedar Creek, where he went into camp. He soon started to send back the Sixth Corps to Grant, but believing that Early intended to attack him, he recalled it to Cedar Creek.

On the 13th of October Sheridan received the following dispatch from Secretary of War Stanton: "If you can come here, a consultation on several points is extremely desirable. I propose to visit General Grant, and would like to see you first." Sheridan was getting ready to attack Early, as the enemy had again appeared in his front in full strength and had attacked a force which he had sent out towards Strasburg. He thought it best, however, to defer making an attack until he had been to Washington for the conference requested by the Secretary of War and had reached an understanding as to his future operations.

When on his way to Washington, Sheridan received a message from General Wright, who had been left in command of the army, enclosing the following dispatch which had been read from the Confederate signals at Three Top Mountain: "TO GENERAL EARLY:

Be ready to move as soon as my forces join you. LONGSTREET, *Lieutenant-General*." Sheridan believed this to be a false signal, but with his usual prudence he ordered Wright to draw in the cavalry and to be ready for an attack. What happened during his absence will appear in the coming chapter.

## CHAPTER XX

### THE BATTLE OF CEDAR CREEK AND SHERIDAN'S RIDE

PERHAPS the most wonderful battle of the Civil War, if not in all history, was the battle of Cedar Creek. It is of this battle that I am about to write, showing how the Union army met with a terrible defeat in the morning, which in the afternoon, by the arrival of General Sheridan, was turned to a glorious victory.

When Sheridan left on his trip to Washington, his army was encamped on the left bank of Cedar Creek near where it joins the Shenandoah River. The water at that time was so low that both river and creek could be crossed by wading. The Confederate army occupied its old position at Fisher's Hill. From his natural watch tower at Three Top, Early could view Sheridan's army as though spread out on a map before him, and could study all its alignments. His army had been recruited and reinforced from Richmond by more than five thousand men. When sending him these men Lee had said, "The enemy must be defeated, and I depend upon you to do it."

Meanwhile the provisions for Early's army were running low, and as he could not, as in former times, feed his army from the Shenandoah Valley, he had either to fight or to retreat up the Valley again. He

was an able and brave soldier and naturally chose the former course.

From his watch tower he discovered that Sheridan's left flank was but lightly picketed. The difficulties, however, of getting around that flank were very great. It was protected by the Shenandoah River, and at this point the mountain rises precipitously and the river hugs closely around it, with only a narrow, rugged pathway between the cliff and the river. The river had to be crossed twice in order to reach his enemy's flank. Yet notwithstanding these difficulties he planned to accomplish the feat.

Leaving behind them their swords and canteens and every other thing that could make a clinking sound to betray their march, at half-past three in the morning the Confederates came in sight of the Union camp fires. By moonlight, while the Union army slumbered, they crept stealthily along the base of Massanutton Mountain to gain Sheridan's rear. They had left behind them forty pieces of artillery, to be rushed down the pike at a given signal. Everything seemed to favor their success. As though to shield the Confederates that she had so far lighted on their way, the moon veiled herself behind a misty cloud as they neared the Union flank and gained the position from which to attack.

The surprise was complete. As the Confederates under Gordon swept away the Union pickets, with a crackle of rifle shots, the Union soldiers rushed from their tents to see what was the matter just as the enemy came through the mist like an army of ghosts

and with wild, exulting yells drove everything before them. Then, as soon as the success of this flank attack was assured, Early with the rest of his army crossed Cedar Creek and attacked the Union army on the right, while the artillery swept down and joined in the uproar of musketry and drove the Union lines in disorder. Attacked on flank and front and rear, the soldiers of Sheridan's army could not fight, for they were driven into confused masses upon each other. They were too old in the business of soldiering not to know that the best thing for them to do was to get away. Except here and there, they got no chance to rally and resist the impetuous attack. They fled, for it was madness to resist, or attempt to resist, until the ranks could be re-formed.

General Wright, roused by the uproar, attempted to form a line to hold them back, only to see it swept away again, as Gordon with his three Confederate brigades came thundering like phantom soldiers from out the cloudlike mists on flank and rear. Crook's corps first broke and drifted away in flight. This left the Nineteenth Corps uncovered, and they, though still resisting, soon followed. The heroic Sixth Corps, farther in the rear, found time to fall back with some semblance of order, Getty's staunch Vermonters stemming the torrent and keeping up their formations and partially keeping the Confederates in check in their front.

Three hours passed; the Union army had been driven back over four miles. General Ricketts had thrown forward the Sixth Corps at right angles to its



former position to cover the retreat. The enemy, meanwhile, was endeavoring to cut off the Union army from its line of retreat in order to destroy it in detail.

The mists had now drifted away, so that the Union generals could view the field and judge what the enemy were doing and what they themselves could do. The sight was not reassuring; the army was being steadily driven back. Still, there were some successful attempts to stem the tide of disaster. Take courage, brave men, for Sheridan—a host in himself—is coming up from Winchester!

After his interview with the Secretary of War on the afternoon of October 18, Sheridan returned from Washington on a special train. He arrived at Winchester in the afternoon, and thinking that nothing special called him to the front that night, looked over the ground around the town with his engineer officer, with a view to putting it in a condition of defense, so that it could be held by a small number of men. He then went to bed for the night.

Early in the morning, before he was up, the officer of the pickets around Winchester came to his room to inform him that there was artillery firing in the direction of Cedar Creek.

“Is it a continuous fire?” inquired Sheridan.

“No, it is not a sustained fire,” replied the officer.

“That’s all right, then,” said Sheridan. “It’s probably Granger making a reconnaissance.” He tried to get another nap, but he could not sleep.

Then the officer came again, saying that the firing

at the front could be heard more distinctly, but that it was not continuous.

"It's all right," said Sheridan again. "It is Granger banging away to find out what the rebs are up to." Feeling uneasy, he went down to an early breakfast, at the same time ordering his black horse, Rienzi, to be groomed and saddled ready to mount.

It was half-past nine o'clock as he rode through Winchester on his way to his army. As he passed through the town he noticed that the rebel women of the place made insulting gestures. He thought little of this, for he knew that they did not love him. He halted for a moment, with his ear down to his saddle. The sound was now unmistakable; it was nearing him, and there was a continuous roar of cannon. He then knew that the women of Winchester had in some indefinable way got intelligence which to them was "good news," which he had not received. Did that mean defeat and disaster to his army?

He rode now at a tremendous pace until he reached the top of a hill just beyond Abraham's Creek, when there burst upon his vision a sight that made even his brave heart almost stand still. It was the unmistakable signs of a beaten and retreating army. There were wounded men, stragglers, baggage wagons, ambulances, crowding the road in confusion, all hastening towards Winchester.

He considered for a moment what it was best to do. He decided with a flash of inspiration. It was to ride to the front, re-form his army, and fight it out, sharing the fate of his men, who had fought so

gallantly under his command. With this resolution, first ordering the commander of the infantry at Winchester to stretch a guard across the road to stop the fugitives, he urged forward his horse at the top of his speed, halting a moment among the crowd of stragglers and wounded to inquire, "What has happened, men?" "The army," they replied, "is all smashed to pieces!"

"Face the other way!" said Sheridan; "we'll get a twist on them yet!"

At the sound of his voice their apathetic faces lit up; they did face the other way, with hurrahs and exclamations of delight. Then, ordering the baggage wagons to be parked by the roadside, he and his escort rode on at a swinging pace. The crowd of stragglers, wounded men, and baggage wagons grew thicker and thicker, so that he was obliged to take to the fields. To every group he swung his cap and called out, "Face the other way, men; we are going to get a twist on the rebs! We are going back to our camps!"

The men began to cheer. Their faces lighted up with confidence. The current that had been drifting to the rear was seen moving to the front. Hope and enthusiasm had taken the place of despondency and listlessness; or, as Sheridan afterwards phrased it, "Men who, on reflection, found that they had not done themselves justice, came back with cheers."

On reaching still nearer the front, among the drifting masses of his army, he was greeted with a tempest of cheers, and word ran through the masses, "Sheridan is here." His eyes gleaming with eager con-

fidence, he called out to them as he swung his hat: "Get into line, men! We are going back to our camps! Face the other way, men!" Enthusiasm in place of discouragement began to shine in the men's faces as they shouldered their muskets and turned back, shouting, "Hurrah for little Phil! Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!" and marched back to the field from which they had fled.

On Sheridan rode with terrible speed, his black horse flecked with foam, with nostrils distended, seeming to understand the necessity for its very best efforts.

The first officer he met was General Wright. "My God, Sheridan," he exclaimed: "Oh! I am glad you have come!" After a few words with Wright the general sped on to the farthest front, where, galloping around a line of ambulances, he drew rein on a slight hill in full view of the battle-field. It was a terrible sight for the commander of an army. On the road and in the fields was a wreck of material: artillery, caissons, ammunition trains, broken wagons, stretcher bearers, cavalymen with led horses,—in fact, all the signs of a badly defeated army. It took a clear head and a stout heart to plan and think under such dispiriting conditions.

The general rode to a division of infantry formed on a hillside. They were Getty's Vermonters, whose staunchness had been tested in many battles. The flags were flying on their front, and near them was a battery engaged in a savage duel with a battery of the enemy's. Further to the right, across a little valley, was a larger

force upon a hillside facing the enemy. There was a pause just then on the part of the Confederates, for an army becomes disorganized in pursuit as well as in defeat, and they were straightening out their lines, to finish the Yankee army with a final knockout blow. It took time to make their formations for the finishing attack which they believed themselves about to deliver.

Sheridan turned to a member of his staff who was with him and, pointing, said, "Go there to that skirmish line and report the condition to me as soon as possible." He then rode over to Getty's men, and was greeted with a tumult of cheers. From all along the line numerous flags were waved that did not belong to Getty's division. The brave color bearers of other regiments had stopped here when the men had deserted them. He was greeted by them with joyous and repeated cheers and waving of the flags.

The member of his staff who had been sent to the skirmish line came up and reported, "Colonel Lowell says he can hold the line where he is forty minutes, and will try to hold it longer if need be." "Go to the right," said Sheridan, "and find the other two divisions of the Sixth Corps and have them come in on the right of Getty. See General Emory, and have him bring up what is left of the Nineteenth Corps." Then, hesitating, he sprang to his saddle, saying, "I will go with you."

General Emory was found about a mile away with his force on a hillside, partly protected by a ledge, his troops thinned but not disorganized. Forsyth came to Sheridan and reported, "General Emory thinks

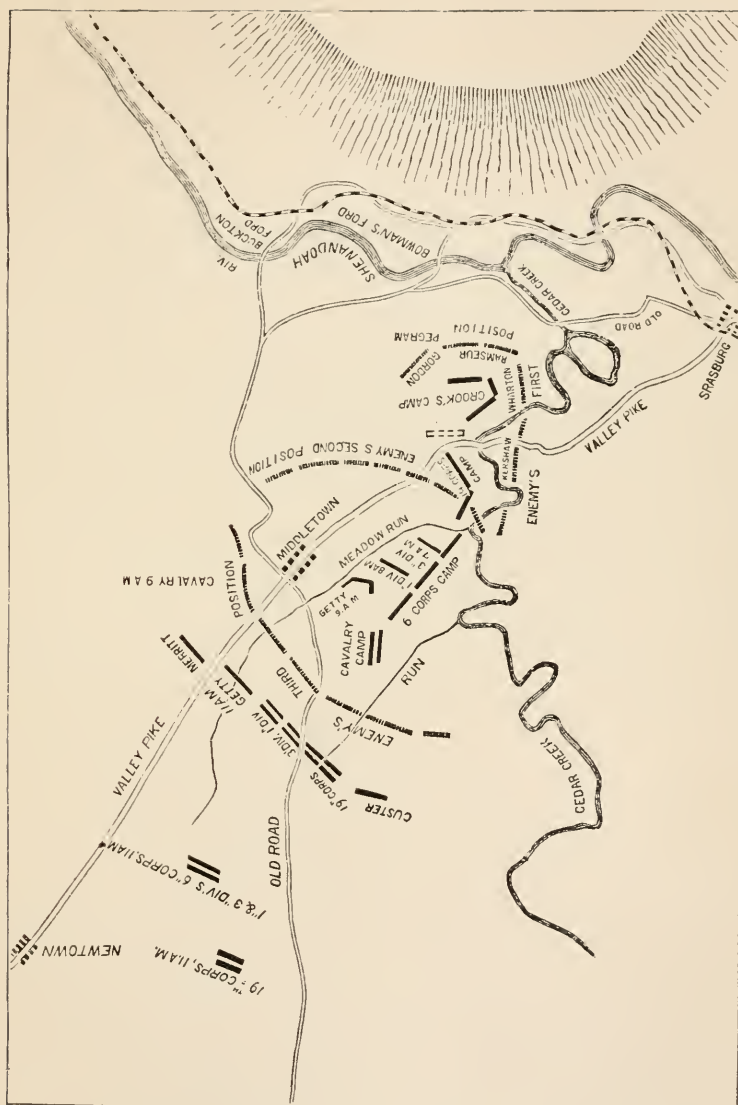


that he is in a good position to attack the enemy's flank, should they advance on the Sixth Corps, and that you may wish to have them remain where they are."

"Go back and say to General Emory, he must bring up his men *at once*; don't lose a moment!"

The line was formed under Sheridan's direction, and a group of officers gathered around him, among them two who were afterwards Presidents of the United States,—Lieutenant William McKinley and General Rutherford B. Hayes. It was suggested that Sheridan should ride down the line to let all the men know that he had returned to his army. At first he said no; but, being urged, he rode in front of the battle line from one end to the other. One glance at his confident, inspiring face and at the black horse that bore him was enough; the soldiers knew that their commander whom they loved and trusted was with them. Cheers, loud and joyful, ran down the line as at a tremendous pace he rode along the ranks to reassure his men. "We are going back to our camp, men! Never fear; we are going to whip them out of their boots!" he repeated.

At that time it was twelve o'clock or later. The men had been fighting or marching since early morning, with little or nothing to eat. As soon as the skirmishers were formed they were commanded to rest in place. The rest was short. The Nineteenth Corps was formed in the edge of a wood. The rustling in the woods soon gave warning that the enemy was advancing to attack. Then the sharp *snap, snap, crack, crack*, of musketry and the long gray line, with



PLAN OF BATTLE OF CEDAR CREEK.



a rushing sound, swept through the wood with confident step. With a long-drawn-out, piercing yell they delivered a volley and rushed forward. The blue line crackled and a flame of fire came from the whole line of rifles. The fire of the Confederates slackened, then grew fainter, until it died away. They had fallen back. A tumult of cheers burst from the throats of the Union soldiers when they knew that they had repulsed this first attempt of the enemy on their newly formed line.

While re-forming his lines Sheridan had received a report that Confederate troops were coming up in his rear from the Front Royal pike, and was waiting to find whether or not the report was true. Meanwhile, every moment, the line was being strengthened. One by one tired men came up from the rear and dropped down into line by the side of their comrades. In addition to these, two thousand of different regiments had been got together and placed under the command of General Crook.

It was three o'clock in the afternoon when the orders came to move forward. The Sixth was ordered to attack at once, and the Nineteenth Corps was to keep well closed up on the Sixth. All of Crook's forces and Merritt's cavalry were on the left of the pike, while Custer covered the right flank with his cavalry. The right division of the Nineteenth Corps was ordered to outflank the enemy and wheel towards the pike.

The tidings that Sheridan was going to "get a twist on the rebs" ran through the line like electricity. The

despondency of the morning had given place to confidence; hope and enthusiasm shone in every face. The men pulled down the visors of their caps as though about to breast a storm and were ready for their best.

Then came the orders: "Attention! Shoulder arms! Guide left." And then, with long-drawn-out emphasis, came the command, "Forward—left—left," and the whole line swept forward like a mighty wave. Then, as they encountered the enemy, a crackling fire ran along the line. "Forward. Forward, men! Forward!" came the commands, all along the ranks. As they met a staggering fire of musketry from the enemy that left a trail of dead and wounded behind them, there was heard the command, "*Steady*, men! *Steady!*" Then, "Fire!" A volley at short range burst from the line of blue! "Keep it up, men! Give it to them! Don't let up on them!" and similar inspiring commands were heard all along the Union lines. There was no need for encouraging commands, for the men were terribly in earnest; they wanted revenge for the morning's defeat. The Confederate fire slackened, and then died away. Cheers loud and triumphant ran down the line; for they had repulsed the enemy that but a few hours before was in the full tide of victory.

Sheridan's army was now well together in the order named: Wright on the left, Emory on the right, Custer and Merritt on the right and left flanks. Sheridan was not satisfied simply to repulse the enemy; he intended to overwhelm him. He had promised his men



that they were going back to their camps, and he intended to keep his promise. Early was prepared for vigorous resistance. He was behind breastworks thrown up in his front, and stubbornly resisted the attack, especially in front of the Nineteenth Corps.

The latter's flank, which was overlapping the Union right, was charged at a weak spot by a brigade of cavalry. It was broken and melted away amid a tumult of musketry fire. Wright's corps sprang forward, driving the Confederates before them; Merritt's cavalry charged, driving them through Middletown in confusion. The reflux wave of battle was resistless. The Confederate line of battle went to pieces in a confused and disorderly rout, with the triumphant soldiers of Sheridan's army pursuing.

Sheridan's infantry halted at their old camp, whence they had been so unexpectedly driven in the morning; while the cavalry pursued to Hupp's Hill, where a broken bridge blocked the road. Here they gathered a great harvest of guns, wagons, and material of all kinds. All the cannon that had been abandoned in the morning were recaptured, besides twenty-two other guns and one thousand five hundred prisoners, which fully made up for those lost in the morning's surprise.

With this defeat, all operations in the Shenandoah Valley ended forever. Early's defeat was so complete that his army was scattered, never again to achieve anything worthy of mention. Sheridan's face expressed great satisfaction when he learned of the complete rout of the Confederates and the great capture of material. He had cause for pride.

The victory achieved over Early, whose veteran soldiers were as fine as the Confederacy produced, was received throughout the country with acclamations of joy. It gave Sheridan the confidence of the people and government, which he retained to the end of the war, and the enthusiastic devotion of his troops. His name was a synonym of victory. Grant said of Cedar Creek, "It stamped Sheridan, what I have always thought him, one of the ablest of generals." Congress passed resolutions commendatory and eulogistic. The different Northern States followed its example. The President sent a dispatch saying, "With great pleasure I tender to you and your brave army the thanks of the nation, and my own personal admiration and gratitude, for the month's operations in the Shenandoah Valley; and especially for the splendid work of October 19, 1864."

Sheridan was appointed a major-general in the regular army on the 8th of November, and his commission for that rank was accompanied by a letter from Abraham Lincoln, expressing his appreciation "of the personal gallantry, military skill, and just confidence in the courage and patriotism of your troops, displayed by you on the 19th day of October, at Cedar Run, whereby, under the blessings of Providence, your routed army was reorganized, a great national disaster averted, and a brilliant victory achieved over the rebels for the third time, in pitched battle, within thirty days."



*Phil. H. Sheridan*

As a Major-general. Appointed November 8, 1864.



## CHAPTER XXI

### SHERIDAN REJOINS GRANT (March, 1865)

AFTER the battle of Cedar Creek, Sheridan did not think it prudent to send any part of his force to Grant's army. Early's army might, in such a case, be temporarily reinforced by Lee, and in any case his army was as strong in numbers as after the battle of Fisher's Hill. Sheridan's successes gave his views weighty consideration, both with Grant and with those in authority at Washington.

After his defeat at Cedar Creek, Early had fallen back to New Market, where he remained three weeks, receiving additions to his army, of conscripts, convalescents, and detail men, as well as Crosby's cavalry. In November, 1864, Sheridan withdrew his army to Kernstown in order to gain a better and shorter line for receiving supplies, and also better quarters for his men. Early, thinking this indicated that Sheridan had sent a part of his army to Grant, hurriedly formed his whole army to attack in case this conjecture proved true. He was not left long in doubt. Merritt's cavalry went out and attacked Rosser and the other divisions of Early's cavalry, drove it across the Shenandoah River and up the Luray Valley, capturing two of their cannon, twenty officers, two hundred and twenty-five men, and two battle flags. This was enough to satisfy Early that it was not prudent to



remain longer in the vicinity of Sheridan; and he went back without delay to New Market again. Soon after this he sent Kershaw's division back to Lee and Crosby's brigade to southwest Virginia.

Grant, hearing that the whole of Early's army had been transferred to Lee's lines, wrote to Sheridan, "If you are satisfied this is a fact, send the Sixth Corps to me without delay;" and then, with his usual persistency, he went back to his old plan, saying: "If your cavalry can cut the Virginia Central road, now is the time to do it."

Sheridan at once made a reconnaissance with cavalry and reported that Early had about ten thousand infantry and a division of cavalry at least, that Kershaw's infantry was the only force that had left the Valley, and that, unless there was some great necessity, it was better to wait until the season was a little further advanced.

At the beginning of November, Lee ordered Early to send all of his Second Corps to Petersburg. Almost at the same time Grant ordered Sheridan to send him the Sixth Corps. Early had, meanwhile, broken up his camp at New Market and removed with his remaining troops into winter quarters at Stanton, but leaving a signal station at Three Top Mountain to inform him of Sheridan's movements.

At the close of the year Sheridan had only the Nineteenth Corps and his cavalry with him, and early in 1865 one of the divisions of his infantry was sent South, leaving him but one. December 19, Torbert, with eight thousand cavalry, was sent to strike the

Virginia Central Railroad. After blowing up a bridge and capturing two of the enemy's guns and several gunners, he returned, driving before him a herd of two hundred cattle. On the 20th Custer attacked Rosser, and moved down the Valley again after a loss of twenty-two men killed and wounded.

February 27, 1865, Sheridan moved up the Valley for a final cleaning up of the Shenandoah. He had a grand array of ten thousand cavalry with which to complete the work of destroying the Central Railroad, and, if possible, to capture Lynchburg. At first Rosser made an ineffectual attempt to resist the march at Mt. Crawford. He started to burn the bridge at the Middle Fork of the Shenandoah; but Sheridan's men were in the mood to undertake anything, and they swam the river, defeated him, and captured thirty prisoners and twenty ambulances and wagons.

On March 2, Early was found behind strong intrenchments near Waynesboro, which is on the west side of the Blue Ridge. He had boasted that Sheridan would never be permitted to pass through Rockford Gap; but Custer, finding that Early's left flank was somewhat exposed, without waiting for supports sent a dismounted regiment against that flank, while his mounted men attacked the breastworks in front. Some fierce fighting ensued; the cavalry leaping their horses over the breastworks, while the Confederate infantry made a stubborn resistance with muskets, bayonets, and clubbed muskets. The flanking movement stampeded the Confederates, while two regiments of cavalry, charging through the break made by Custer,

passed through the town and did not stop until they had crossed the South River, where they were in Early's rear. Here they formed and held the east bank till the whole of Early's men had surrendered, except Rosser, Early, and a dozen or more other officers and men, who made their escape to the woods and got across the Blue Ridge. Sheridan captured seventeen battle flags, eleven pieces of artillery, and sixteen hundred officers and men, besides all the wagons, tents, and ammunition of Early's army.

This effectually cleaned out the Shenandoah Valley. The prisoners and captured material were sent by guard to Winchester, and on the 3d of March the railroad bridge across the South River was destroyed.

The Union column now moved across the Blue Ridge, in a cold and drenching rain, on March 3d. The trains were left behind to be brought up later, while the troops were pushed on to Charlottesville. This place was occupied by the Union troops by noon of the 4th of March, the authorities coming out in advance to meet the cavalry and delivering the keys of public buildings in the style of ancient times. Heavy rain had been falling, and the roads were almost bottomless.

The Valley being now at Sheridan's mercy, railroads were broken up, the canal disabled by destroying every lock from Scotsville to New Market, the iron bridge across the South Fork of the Shenandoah wrecked, and mills, factories, and subsistence destroyed with relentless hand. The few Union citizens suffered alike with the disloyal. One of the former said to the Union

soldiers, "If you don't burn it, the rebels will take it when they come this way;" and then he set fire to the last stack of wheat that remained on which to feed his family.

The war in the Valley was ended. Before Sheridan began operations there it was, and had been almost continuously, in the undisputed possession of the Confederates. He left it with the power of the Confederacy there broken forever.

Grant's instructions prescribed that Sheridan should cross to the south side of James River and capture Lynchburg. The river was, however, too swollen by heavy rains for him to do so. But this did not disturb Sheridan's equanimity. With admirable poise of judgment and fertility of resource, and nowise discouraged, he abandoned the taking of Lynchburg and went forward with the purpose of crossing the James between Lynchburg and Richmond. Then, finding the enemy had destroyed all the bridges, he was reduced to the alternative of going back down the Valley again or of reaching Grant's army by way of White House. With characteristic boldness and courage he chose the latter course. Though it was not the original plan, it produced as good an effect.

On March 9, 1865, Sheridan's main column started eastward, destroying locks and dams, while Devin's division was sent on a forced march with instructions to destroy everything below Columbia. On the 10th of March Sheridan reached that place and sent word to Grant, reporting what he had done and requesting that rations and forage be sent him at White House, and

also a pontoon bridge to enable him to cross the Pamunkey River. With his usual prudence and foresight he considered it too dangerous to march down the south side, where troops from Richmond might destroy him.

He had to wait a day for his trains, for the mud greatly hindered them. The cavalry, preceding them in formations of four, threw up windrows of mud, making the roads so bad as to wear out the mules. Sheridan says that he would have been obliged to abandon his trains but for the timely help of two thousand negroes who had joined his march, who lifted the mud-encompassed wagons through the sloughs.

Shortly after this Custer captured some of the men who had been with Early, with two of his escaping staff officers. Early, however, escaped and crossing the South Anna River, reached Richmond,—the last man of the Army of the Shenandoah, probably, in arms.

On the 18th of March Sheridan arrived at White House after overcoming almost insurmountable difficulties, and there found supplies awaiting him. He had learned of the intention of the Confederates under Longstreet to cut off his force before reaching White House, but he had calculated his march so judiciously that the Confederates, after reaching Hanover Court House and finding they were unable to do so, retired to Richmond again. On the 25th of March Sheridan reached City Point by boat, which he had taken at General Grant's request.

His march from the Valley has been characterized



by him as one of greater hardships than was ever before encountered by the cavalry. In his report of it he says: "There perhaps never was a march where Nature offered such impediments and shrouded herself in such gloom as this. Incessant rains, deep and almost impassable streams, swamps, and mud, were overcome with a constant cheerfulness on the part of the troops that was truly admirable. Both officers and men appeared buoyed up by the thought that we had completed our work in the Shenandoah Valley."

Sheridan had been anxious to join Grant, for he foresaw that the end of the Confederacy was drawing near and he wanted to be in at the death. At this time the net which Grant had thrown out around the Confederate armies was being drawn closer and closer together. Fort Fisher and Wilmington had been captured; Thomas had defeated and almost destroyed Hood's army at Nashville, Tennessee; Sherman had captured Atlanta and marched in triumph up the coast, causing the fall of Charleston and Savannah and destroying the Southern Railroad, as well as mills, workshops, and warehouses. On the 23d of March he had reached Goldsboro, North Carolina, and was joined by the Union column from Wilmington and New Bern. Most of the Confederate forces were now closed in between Sherman, the Army of the Potomac, and the Atlantic Ocean, James River, and the Alleghanies. The Confederate armies were hopelessly entangled in Grant's great net, and the last days of the Confederacy were at hand. Sheridan had arrived in time to give the final blow, as we shall see in forthcoming pages.

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE BATTLE OF FIVE FORKS

UPON Sheridan's arrival at City Point, the general went at once to the little hut where Grant made his headquarters. The Commander-in-Chief greeted him in his usual simple manner: "How are you, Sheridan?" And then, as was his custom, waited for his visitor to begin the conversation.

Sheridan gave a brief narrative of what he had done since leaving Winchester and his reasons for departing from the instructions he had received.

"Very good," said Grant. "There are not many who would give up an independent command, as you have, voluntarily; but I will see that you don't lose anything by it." And then he began talking about a plan he had formed for Sheridan to strike the railroads; and as he talked he handed him a letter of written instructions which gave the details of the plan. These were, besides cutting the Danville and South Side railroads, to cut loose and go to Sherman, and then both march to Petersburg and help finish Lee's army.

Sheridan at once objected to that part of the plan that was to take him from the Army of the Potomac, and said: "We can finish Lee without Sherman's

help and with what men we have. If you carry out your plan people will say that *you* couldn't whip Lee, and had to send for Sherman to do it. That will hurt the pride of the Army of the Potomac. I tell you we can whip him without any help!"

Sheridan was looking very gloomy and disappointed, when Grant said quietly: "That part is put in for a blind. The peace men of the North say we can't end the war by fighting, but must make terms with the Confederates; if we meet with a check, they will say we are defeated. It is my intention to end the war right here."

"I am glad to hear it," said Sheridan, slapping his knee and his face lighting up with pleasure. "And we can do it!"

Grant had set the 29th of March for beginning operations against Lee's army. Before that time arrived President Lincoln came to City Point, and not long after Sherman followed. There was an interesting conference between the President and the three famous brother soldiers.

Lincoln was far from cheerful. He did not tell even one of his little stories to illustrate his talk, according to his usual custom. It is possible that he felt the overhanging shadow of the violent death that so soon befell him. His mind, it was evident, was dwelling upon the possibilities of the coming campaign; for he asked if it were not possible to end the war without another battle. He said to Sheridan also, as though dreading the issue of battle: "What effect will it have if, while you are moving on the Confed-

erate left, Lee should come out and capture City Point?"

"Lee wouldn't do such a rash thing," said Sheridan; "he had enough of it when he got worsted at Fort Steadman the other day."

On the night of March 28 Sheridan received his instructions to move at an early hour on the following day, with the assurance from Grant that he would follow or engage the enemy. His instructions were to cut the Southside and Danville railroads, by which Lee received supplies for his army and by which he might retreat, and, having done this, to return to the Army of the Potomac or join Sherman in North Carolina, just as he thought best.

In compliance with these instructions, on the morning of the 29th Sheridan moved out towards Ream's Station, on the Weldon Railroad,—the general movement of all his divisions being westward. The frost had thawed, the roads were almost hub-deep for his wagons and knee-deep for his horses. With a part of his cavalry he reached Dinwiddie, a place of great strategic importance, for it was on the Five Forks Road, which led directly to Lee's right flank. So far he had gained a bloodless but not mudless advantage over the enemy.

The evening of his arrival a heavy rainstorm set in, and as his headquarters' wagon was stuck in the mud, far back on the road, he had neither food nor tent. He and his staff took up their quarters for the night in a dilapidated tavern which had been propped up with pine poles to keep it from falling over. While here he

got a message from Grant to abandon all thoughts of the raid that had been planned, and to prepare to act in conjunction with the rest of the army against Lee. The rain, which had been falling for hours, had turned the roads seemingly into bottomless bogs and quicksands. So many complaints had come to Grant about the impossibility of continuing operations, that he had sent a message to Sheridan intimating that he might be compelled to suspend movements until the mud dried up. This did not suit Sheridan, and he rode over to see Grant. While waiting to see the general, Sheridan talked to some of his staff officers about the situation. "I am ready," said Sheridan to them, "to start out and smash things!"

"But how," said they, "are you going to get forage for your horses?"

"Forage?" he said. "I'll get all the forage I need, if I have to corduroy every mile of road. I tell you, *now* is the time to smash Lee's army! Mud? What's a little mud!"

I suspect that he must have talked to Grant in the same hopeful, vehement manner; for, after listening to him in imperturbable silence, Grant said, in that simple way of his which showed that his decision was irrevocable, "We will go on."

Sheridan's cheerful views seemed to infect those with whom he came in contact. "If you will let me have the Sixth Corps," he said to Grant, "I believe I can break through the Confederate right without any other help."

"No," said Grant, "the roads are too bad for mov-



ing infantry at present; you will have to seize Five Forks with your cavalry."

At that time the left flank of the Union army, under Warren, rested on the Boydtown road not far from where it joined the Quaker road; then came Humphry's, Wright's, and Park's corps, in the order named, with the right flank resting on Appomattox River.

When the Army of the Potomac had moved to the left, Lee advanced his infantry to the White Oak road, and by drawing in his cavalry protected the cross-roads at Five Forks. Here he had also intrenched and otherwise strengthened the position, as though it were a city instead a junction of country roads.

Returning from his conference with Grant, Sheridan stopped to see General Warren, who spoke discouragingly of the prospects. Warren was an able soldier, but was slower and more deliberate than Sheridan. The muddy roads discouraged him, and the mud seemed to have befogged his ordinarily clear brain.

Upon Sheridan's arrival at Dinwiddie things began to move, in spite of mud. He sent out Merritt with his cavalry to find out the location and strength of the enemy. This reconnaissance brought on a sharp fight, during which the Confederates were forced back to Five Forks. There they took position behind their heavy line of intrenchments. Sheridan learned that Pickett's division of Confederate infantry had arrived to support the cavalry, and saw by this that the enemy intended to fight for the possession of the coveted cross-roads. He reported the situation to Grant, who

offered him the Fifth Corps to help him capture the position. Sheridan replied, "Give me the Sixth Corps; I know what I can do with them, and they know me." Grant, however, said that the Sixth Corps could not be taken from the line.

Sheridan had at this time three divisions of cavalry, numbering in all about nine thousand horsemen. On the night of the 30th the two brigades of Devin were camped on the road leading to Five Forks, while many other cavalymen were trying to get the wagons out of the mud. On the 31st it had stopped raining, and Sheridan made preparations to capture Five Forks.

Merritt advanced and, notwithstanding an obstinate resistance by the rebel picket, had but little trouble in getting possession of the coveted cross-roads, for the enemy at that time were turning their attention to something else. General Pickett, who was now in command of both the Confederate cavalry and five brigades of infantry, was marching to get in Merritt's rear by crossing Chamberlain Creek. Sheridan had already seized a ford of much importance on the creek, but the enemy succeeded in crossing higher up, but not without a sharp fight. In the fighting and maneuvers that followed Pickett got between the forces of Merritt and Crook, cutting off both Devin and Davis from the road to Dinwiddie and compelling them to retreat across the country and reach the rest of Sheridan's army by a long and difficult march.

At four o'clock in the afternoon things looked critical for Sheridan. He, however, concentrated his forces at Dinwiddie, about a mile northwest from the

cross-roads, and determined to hold on at all hazards. His line was a semi-circle in form, with the left in some woods half a mile west of the Court House and his right near the Boydtown road. His horse artillery had been brought up and every gun placed in line. It was near sunset when the Confederates, thinking the victory was theirs, made a dash over an open field with wild yells when, *whew!* one of Sheridan's divisions attacked their left flank with such sudden vigor that it fell back in astonishment. This enabled the division of Smith, that had held the ford, to come up in line with the rest of the forces.

Just before sundown the enemy, in a long, dense, gray line, marched over an open field to the attack. Sheridan, accompanied by some of his officers, rode along his lines to encourage his men, and was received with loud cheers and exclamations of confidence.

"We are going to stay here, men," said Sheridan; "we aren't going to allow that crowd to drive us!"

The Confederates, seeing the group, opened on it with their artillery, emptying several saddles. The horse artillery replied by opening fire upon the Confederate lines. The cavalry, dismounted, waited until the enemy were within short range, and then opened fire with their repeating rifles. The Confederates stood the devastating fire but a short time and then broke for the woods in a greater hurry than when they advanced.

Sheridan sent word to Grant that he had just repulsed the Confederate infantry and, though outnumbered, he proposed to stay at Dinwiddie. Grant re-

plied that he had ordered Warren with the Fifth Corps, and also Mackenzie's cavalry, from the Army of the James, sent to him. At the same time he gave him full authority to use this force as he thought best.

Pickett was at this time completely isolated from Lee's army, and Sheridan planned to destroy him, if possible, before he could get back to the main Confederate lines. With this plan in view, he sent a courier to General Warren to inform him of the position of the enemy in his front, saying, "Any force moving down the road I am holding, or on the White Oak road, will be in the enemy's rear." He closed his message with the words, "Do not fear my leaving here. If the enemy remains, I shall fight at daylight."

Meade had sent word to Sheridan that Warren would be up by midnight. When daylight dawned and Warren had not come, Sheridan was angry. Warren, instead of marching through the night, had encamped and at daylight was just breaking bivouac. So the golden opportunity of destroying Pickett at that time had passed; for as soon as Lee was informed of Warren's movement he instructed Pickett to fall back with his whole force to Five Forks.

Sheridan, however, knew that Pickett must fight at Five Forks, for its possession was of vital importance to Lee. Leaving only a cavalry picket behind, the Confederates fell back to that place. Sheridan drove back the cavalry pickets and followed up the retreating enemy vigorously. At last, at seven o'clock in the morning, he was joined by Warren's infantry, consisting of three divisions, under command

of General Ayres, Griffin, and Crawford, about half-way between Dinwiddie Court House and Five Forks.

As Warren was now in position where he could act in concert with his cavalry, Sheridan hurried up to Five Forks, leaving Warren to bring up the Fifth Corps. Though filled with intense ardor, his judgment and control of his troops were never more comprehensive and strong. The plan which he made for the coming battle was ingeniously conceived and skillfully executed, matching in generalship Napoleon's best efforts. It was to attack Pickett's whole front with Merritt's two divisions of cavalry, make believe that he was about to turn the right flank of the enemy, and then with the Fifth Corps attack his left. As the Fifth Corps moved into battle, Mackenzie's cavalry was to cover its right flank, in this way cutting off Pickett's troops from communication with Lee.

Sheridan explained this plan to Warren, informing him how the enemy were posted and how he wished him to place his troops. Warren seemed to comprehend clearly what was required, but did not appear solicitous. Sheridan interpreted his manner as being apathetic and indifferent. He was irritated by this seeming indifference, and was fearful lest his cavalry should expend all their ammunition before the battle began.

About four o'clock Warren began his attack, moving almost at an angle with the White Oak road, where the Confederate intrenchments were. The enemy's left formed a right angle, about one hundred yards in length, to his main line, and was protected by



strong earthworks behind a veil of small thick pine wood. Moving forward, Ayres' division formed a pivot from which the two other divisions wheeled and, therefore, encountered the enemy first at the angle described. He received the enemy's fire alone and staggered back, as though about to break. Seeing this, Sheridan dashed along the line, where the enemy's bullets were pattering like big raindrops, calling out to the men words of cheerful encouragement and finding something to say to every regiment: "Come on, men! We've got them in a tight place! Go for 'em on the jump! They are all ready to run! Hurry up or they will get away from you!" and similar words of confident cheer.

Under the inspiration of their young general's presence the veterans swung down toward the woods, with steady, confident front that boded no good to the Confederates. Sheridan, his face blackened with powder, his black horse throwing mud from his heels, with distended nostrils, as if entering into the spirit of its rider, moved forward with his troops on the enemy. As they entered the entangling underbrush of the wood, the troops met with a terrific fire of musketry that almost broke their lines. At this critical moment Sheridan seized his battle flag from the sergeant who bore it and, waving the crimson and white banner, rallied the men, while bullets hummed around him like angry hornets. One tore his battle flag, another killed the sergeant who had carried it, others struck down members of his staff. Sheridan, meanwhile, dashing from one part of the line to the

other, was waving his flag and calling to the men: "Keep at them, men! We've got them! Go for them! Don't let up on them!" A soldier who was in that line said afterwards to the writer, "A man who wouldn't follow Phil Sheridan ought to die!"

The blue line, rushing forward with fixed bayonets and with tremendous cheers, swept over the Confederate intrenchments among a line of Confederates who had thrown down their arms. Sheridan leaped his horse, Rienzi, over the breastworks among this crowd of surrendering Confederates and, greeting them good-humoredly, called out: "Drop your guns! You will never need them again!" One of them inquired, "Where shall we go?" "Right over there," said Sheridan. "We want every one of you! We will take good care of you!" About fifteen hundred prisoners were captured at this point.

When Ayers went over the works, Devin's division of cavalry went over in company with it and the dismounted cavalry, intermingling with the infantry, hardly stopping to re-form, swept down inside of the Confederate defenses, capturing thousands of prisoners and several pieces of artillery.

Griffin, meanwhile, fell upon the rear of the enemy's left flank. At the same time Crawford moved farther to the right and drove back the skirmishers of the enemy's line, turning the left of any force fighting or trying to fight Ayres and Griffin, till he got to the Ford road. Then Crawford's men swung around and faced southward, and rushed down the reverse side of the enemy's lines.



SHERIDAN AT FIVE FORKS.



The Confederates were now completely surrounded and entrapped. The whole force, after all the resistance they could make, surrendered. Great as was this glorious and decisive victory, it had been won at a comparatively small cost. Only six hundred of the infantry were killed and wounded, while the loss of the cavalry, all told, was but a few hundred men.

Only one sad thing remains to be told of this battle. Before the victory was won Sheridan, dissatisfied with Warren, relieved him from his command and put Griffin in command of the Fifth Corps. The difference in temperament of the two men had led to this action. Sheridan moved faster than Warren, and he doubtless mistook for indifference and apathy the cool and deliberate manner of Warren. The occasion was not an ordinary one and Sheridan claimed that Warren had not risen to the demand of that critical time; and so he deemed it unsafe to retain him longer.

Sheridan's success was tremendous. He had captured thirteen battle flags, six pieces of artillery, nearly six thousand prisoners, and had completely overthrown Pickett. Lee's right had been violently wrenched from his center and would give no more trouble to Grant.



## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE BATTLE OF SAILOR'S CREEK

UPON learning of Sheridan's success, and realizing its decisive character, Grant ordered an attack to be made all along Lee's fortified line. Lee had not expected the defeat that had befallen him at Five Forks, and his retreat was delayed by the necessity of getting his trains with food and other supplies in motion. It was also necessary for him to protect the Confederate Government in its flight from Richmond.

On the evening of April 1, Miles with his division was ordered by Grant to report to Sheridan, who advanced towards Petersburg and attacked the enemy's works where the White Oak road joined the Claiborn road. Just as Sheridan was about to deal the enemy a decisive blow, as he confidently believed, at a vital point, Meade ordered the return of Miles's division.

Meanwhile Merritt's cavalry had been sent westward to break up a line of Confederate cavalry north of Hatcher's Run. This being easily done, the enemy was driven in a northerly direction, while the Fifth Corps was pushed on towards Sutherland Station, in order to come in the rear of that part of the enemy that was then confronting Miles.

The main forces of the Confederate army had, meanwhile, begun their retreat along the river road

south of the Appomattox. Though Sheridan picked up a few prisoners, the darkness did not allow of much being accomplished. The next morning, however, the pursuit was resumed with great vigor, the Fifth Corps all the while keeping close up to the cavalry, and pressing on the heels of Lee's retreating army. During the day hundreds of prisoners were captured by Sheridan, as well as five pieces of artillery and many wagons. At Deep Creek the harassed Confederates turned on Merritt, who was in advance, and attacked him so furiously that he halted and waited for Crook's cavalry to arrive before resuming the pursuit. Night, meanwhile, came and the enemy resumed their march under the protection of darkness.

It was now apparent to Sheridan that the Confederates were heading for Amelia Court House, as a point of concentration for their troops that were moving north and south of the Appomattox River. To head off Lee's column Sheridan ordered Crook to strike the Danville Railroad and then move south towards Jettersville, and at the same time the Fifth Corps was ordered to that place by a direct route, while Merritt was sent to Amelia Court House.

After putting these forces in motion, Sheridan with an escort of a hundred men hurried to Jettersville. Upon his arrival he stretched out his small force to cover the roads till the arrival of his troops. While deploying for this purpose, he captured a man who, upon being searched, was found to have concealed in one of his boots this message from Lee's commissary-general: "The army is at Amelia Court House, short

of provisions. Send 300,000 rations quickly to Burkeville Junction."

This message at once revealed to Sheridan's quick mind that Lee was concentrating his army at Amelia Court House, and also that Crook had broken the telegraph lines after this message had been written. In view of this information, he immediately sent word to hasten Crook up the railroad to Jettersville, while Merritt was hurried forward close upon the heels of the retreating Confederates. A staff officer was also sent to hurry up the Fifth Corps.

Sheridan's men were destitute of rations, and instead of delaying his march for his trains to arrive, he determined to capture for his men the supplies that were ordered by Lee's commissary-general. With this in view, he sent the messages, which were in duplicate, by two of his scouts dressed in the uniforms of Confederate officers, to be sent as written, as soon as a telegraph station was reached, to hurry up the provisions. Farther along in this narrative the reader will see how these trains fell into Sheridan's hands.

Sheridan's cavalry with the Fifth Corps reached Jettersville in the evening of the 4th of April, and on the afternoon of the next day General Meade arrived in advance of his troops, and, being ill, requested Sheridan to place his force in position.

Sheridan had sent out Davis's cavalry to make a reconnaissance. While thus engaged, Davis captured five pieces of artillery, as well as two hundred wagons, several of which belonged to Lee's headquarters.

It was plain to Sheridan that Lee would attempt

to escape by the Pains cross-roads, as soon as his trains were out of the way. He wanted to attack at once, but Meade objected to doing this until all his troops were up, when he proposed to advance to Amelia Court House. Sheridan at once sent word to Grant telling what he had done, saying: "The Second Corps is coming up and I am satisfied that we can capture Lee if we properly exert ourselves. I am going to put all my cavalry on my left except Mackenzie, and with such a disposition of my forces I can see no escape for Lee." He also sent to Grant a captured letter from one of Lee's colonels, which depicted the deplorable state of the Confederate army and closed with the words, "I wish you were here."

When Grant got this communication, he was ten miles from Burkeville Junction; but, though it was night when he received it, he set out at once for Jettersville, arriving there at midnight. He agreed with Sheridan that it was not simply enough to pursue the Confederates, but that they should be headed off, adding, "I have no doubt that Lee is moving now."

Meade requested the return of the Fifth Corps so that he could have all the Army of the Potomac under his command, and it was returned to him. But when on the morning of the 6th Meade advanced to Amelia Court House, he found, as Sheridan had predicted, that Lee had got away.

Believing that Meade's march was useless, Sheridan started out on the road running to Rice Station and discovered the Confederate trains moving on this road. They were so strongly guarded that little impression

could be made on them by Crook. Sheridan first left a force to harass the rear of the retreating trains, and then moved in such a manner as to keep parallel to the Confederate line of march.

Sailor's Creek, from which the battle takes its name, is a small, shallow stream which flows across the road (in a northwesterly direction) leading from Deatonsville to Rice Station. Merritt gained the Rice Station road west of the stream and began destroying the wagons while Crook threw his force squarely across the road, blocking the Confederate troops under Ewell. With the intention of fighting to the death, Ewell placed Anderson's troops on some rising ground west of the creek, behind barricades. His purpose was to make so desperate a fight there that the rest of his forces could get away on the road that led to Farmville. To prevent this, Sheridan formed two divisions of Crook's men and attacked all along Ewell's front, while Merritt fiercely attacked on his right. This kept the Confederates from escaping until the Fifth Corps arrived. Then Ewell, while still contending with the cavalry in desperate battle, found himself in greater peril from the Fifth Corps in his rear.

The brave Confederate general never flinched, but prepared to meet this new danger by placing Custis Lee to the left and Kershaw to the right of the Rice Station road, supporting the latter with the Marine brigade, and held the line of Sailor's Creek with skirmishers.

Grant had ordered the Sixth Corps to follow Sheridan, saying, "The Sixth Corps will go in with a vim any place you may dictate." When Sheridan had re-



quested Wright to hurry up, the soldiers of the Sixth put their leg muscles into action with the greatest possible vigor, and tore through the mud to the scene of battle.

A young soldier who was in one of the cavalry charges, having cleared the enemy's barricades and made his way through the Confederate lines, took careful note of everything he saw and brought to Sheridan information of just how the Confederate lines were posted. So, when Wright came up with his old fighters of the Sixth Corps, he placed Seymour's division on the right of the road, while Wheaton's division, streaming with sweat and breathless with haste, formed on Seymour's left. The artillery rattled up with mud flying from the wheels, and went into position without waiting for Getty's division; for Sheridan feared that the enemy might get away if there was much delay in beginning the fight.

Ewell's force was attacked front and left by Wheaton and Seymour, and Stagg's brigade went in with them along with Devin's cavalry, while Merritt and Crook resumed the fight with their accustomed gallantry and courage. The Confederates, completely hemmed in and seeing but little chance for escape, fought with the desperation of despair. Pressed by the confident Union troops, who were urged on by the fiery zeal of their great commander, they fought with a bravery and courage that commanded the admiration of their enemy. Again and again they surged down almost to the creek. They were bleeding with wounds and were harassed in front and rear, but they still

fought on in sudden attacks and furious sallies. One must lack the common sentiments of manhood who does not feel a thrill of admiration and pity for those brave fighters of a losing cause.

Ewell could at last contend no longer, and all of his immediate command were captured. Anderson's formations were broken but he, with about two thousand of his gallant men, escaped through the woods. Though night had come, Sheridan pushed his cavalry in pursuit for several miles, the tireless Sixth Corps following after them that they might clinch the victory.

The battle had not only destroyed an army corps of the Confederates, but it compelled Lee to abandon his line of march to Danville and obliged Longstreet to take a road leading towards Lynchburg.

Sheridan had captured six generals and over nine thousand prisoners; he had destroyed several hundred wagons, and, more important than all else, was planted squarely across the Confederate line of retreat. At the close of the battle he sent a staff officer to Grant, reporting what he had done.

The Sixth Corps now remained under Sheridan's command until after Lee's surrender.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE END OF THE CONFEDERACY

ON the morning of the 7th of April Sheridan moved out in pursuit of the nearly exhausted Confederates. He sent Crook's division towards Farmville, while Merritt and Mackenzie were directed towards Prince Edward's Court House to head off any effort of Lee to escape by that route to Danville.

Crook overtook Lee's army moving on the north side of the Appomattox, in the vicinity of Farmville. The Confederates were in no mood for trifling with cavalrymen, and savagely attacked and drove Crook across the river. It was now clear to Sheridan's mind that Lee had abandoned all thought of escaping by the way of Danville and was heading for Lynchburg. He therefore resolved to throw his cavalry squarely across the path of Lee's retreat. With this relentless purpose he quickly united his divisions and moved them with fierce haste towards Appomattox depot. His scouts, dressed in the uniform of Confederate officers, were out in every direction, gathering information and at times, it was said, distracting and hindering the Confederates by giving misleading orders. Theirs was a dangerous occupation, needless to say, as all army occupations are.

Another feature of Sheridan's army was a large

number of Confederate battle flags, borne unfurled as trophies of the campaign. At every point there were indications that the last days of the Confederacy were at hand. In Sheridan's track baggage wagons, artillery, and captured material of all kinds littered the roads along which the enemy was fleeing. Sheridan inspired all with whom he came in contact. No soldiers ever did such marching before; it was not unusual for his infantry to march thirty-five miles a day. They were tired, muddy, and hungry, but they wanted to "get there" with Sheridan.

One of his scouts brought information to Sheridan that there were three trains of cars at the Appomattox railway station. These were the trains that had been ordered by Lee's commissary-general from Lynchburg, which order, it will be remembered, was captured and forwarded by telegraph by Sheridan's scouts. As one of these scouts had the original order and was dressed in Confederate uniform, he had no trouble in persuading those in charge of the trains to bring them east of Appomattox Station. Fearing, however, that the true state of affairs might be discovered by the Confederates, Sheridan sent out two regiments to break the railroad, so that they could not be sent back to Lynchburg. Custer took possession of these trains just as the advance guard of Lee's army appeared to secure them. With his customary dash, Custer drove them away, capturing from them a hospital train, twenty-five pieces of artillery, and a large number of wagons that had been sent ahead of Lee's army in the hope that they might be able to reach Lynchburg the





CUSTER CHARGING THE ENEMY.



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next day. The trains were put in charge of some of Sheridan's men, formerly locomotive engineers; and they in a merry mood began running them back and forth like mad, whistling as though destruction had broken loose,—and it had!

The night of the 8th of April was one of great excitement. Sheridan felt that if infantry could be got up, the war would be ended by the capture of Lee's army. Staff officers were sent to Grant and to General Ord requesting them to hurry up the infantry. Ord marched his corps all night, and before sunrise he arrived and informed Sheridan that his men were at hand.

The Confederates were now in great straits; they had met with misfortunes and defeat on every side, and their cause looked hopeless. Lee saw his brave and devoted soldiers fainting with hunger and fatigue, dropping out one by one from his ranks. They were fighting against hope, as well as against their enemies, with brave but failing hearts. Their army was crumbling in pieces. Finally, on the night of the 8th of April, Lee held a council of war, at which it was determined that in the morning they would if possible break through Sheridan's cavalry and try to reach Lynchburg.

In the early hours Sheridan saw a heavy line of soldiers in gray massed and bearing down upon his troops near the village of Appomattox. He ordered his men to fall back slowly, and in such a manner as to leave space for the advance of Ord's infantry. The men in gray advanced, brushing aside the cavalry with

their old warlike vigor; but when they saw the dense blue lines of Union infantry emerging from the woods, they knew that all was over. They halted and began to retire towards a hill in front of Appomattox Court House, as the blue lines advanced over the ground abandoned by the cavalry.

Sheridan decided to charge, and was making ready by giving orders, when an aide-de-camp rode hastily up to him and called out: "Don't charge! Lee has surrendered!" The long blue line of Ord's corps halted, the men standing at rest, the flags along their front fluttering in the warm spring air. Groups of officers conversed and pointed toward the Confederate lines, while the men stood wearily at parade rest.

Sending word to General Ord, Sheridan rode down with his staff toward the Confederate army, when from some woods there came the crackling of musketry and the hum of bullets. "We are under a flag of truce!" Sheridan called out. "You are violating the truce!" As they did not cease firing, Sheridan and his party, taking shelter in a ravine, again moved towards the Court House, with a sergeant following with his battle flag. In front, when near the Court House, muskets were again leveled at him, and from the rear he heard a Confederate soldier demanding from his sergeant his battle flag. The sergeant had drawn his sword and was about to cut down the Confederate when Sheridan interfered. He then sent forward an officer to a group of Confederates demanding an explanation. The officer returned bearing apologies, and saying that Generals Gordon and Wil-

cox were in the group and invited Sheridan to join them. As he reached them, firing broke out in front of his cavalry.

With his eyes fairly ablaze, Sheridan exclaimed: "General, your men fired on me as I was coming here, and are now undoubtedly treating Custer and Merritt in the same way. We might as well fight it out!"

"Oh! no," said General Gordon, "there must be some mistake."

"Why not send over a staff officer, then, and have your people cease firing?"

"I have no staff officers," said Gordon.

"Then," said Sheridan, "I will lend you one."

The officer delivered the message, but was held as a prisoner of war by the South Carolina general commanding the force.

"But," said the officer bearing the message, "I am under a flag of truce."

"I don't care for flags of truce," said the general; "South Carolinians never surrender."

Merritt's patience, as well as Sheridan's, was now exhausted, and he ordered an attack that put a stop to further violations of the truce and sobered the "last ditch" Confederates who had violated it.

When this disturbance was over, Gordon explained that General Lee had asked for a suspension of hostilities while negotiations with General Grant were in progress.

"I have been informed of it," said Sheridan, "but it seems strange to me that, while the negotiations

were going on, you attempted to break through my lines this morning; and I will make no terms, except that Lee must surrender when Grant gets here."

"There is no doubt," said Gordon, "of Lee's surrender; his army is exhausted."

Shortly after this General Longstreet came up and renewed the assurance given by General Gordon.

Word was then sent to General Meade, by Colonel Forsyth, that he might understand the situation and further bloodshed be prevented.

The little village of Appomattox, consisting of less than a dozen houses, is on rising ground with a broad valley south and west of it. Sheridan had halted his cavalry on a high ridge west of the village, while Ord's infantry line was curved from west to south.

About one o'clock General Grant rode up at a fast pace and, first addressing Sheridan, said, "How are you, Sheridan?"

"First-rate, thank you," said Sheridan. "How are you?"

"Is General Lee up there?" said Grant, looking towards the village.

"Yes," said Sheridan, "he's there in that brick house."

"Very well," said Grant, "let's go up, then."

General Sheridan, with a few officers of his staff, joined General Grant and together they went to the McLean house at Appomattox village, where Lee was awaiting Grant's arrival.

When Sheridan entered the McLean house General Lee, dressed in a new gray uniform, was stand-



ing. His tall form and fine sword and other military appointments presented a contrast to the slight figure and simple dress of the Union commander-in-chief, who was without a sword and with nothing to show his rank but his dingy shoulder-straps. After being presented to Lee, Sheridan retired until after the terms of surrender were agreed upon. Then Colonel Babcock came to the door, saying, "The surrender has been made; you can come in."

When Sheridan reëntered the room, General Grant was writing; and General Lee, who was sitting with some papers in his hand, said to Sheridan, who had previously requested that the two dispatches should be returned to him which he had written notifying General Lee that some of his cavalry were violating the truce, "I am very sorry, but probably my cavalry did not understand."

While the terms of surrender were being signed Lee was seated, and Grant, at a small table, was facing him. Colonel Marshall, Lee's chief-of-staff, stood leaning against the mantel of the old-fashioned broad fireplace. Colonel Babcock and General Seth Williams, of Grant's staff, stood leaning against the wall back of their chief. General Ord was seated near Grant. Besides these there were General Rawlins, Grant's chief-of-staff, who stood near Grant, and five or six other members of his staff.

Sheridan, standing back of General Grant, fell into an unconsciously dramatic attitude, with his sheathed saber resting on his left arm. His broad-shouldered but slight form, his large head, his dark eyes, all ex-

pressed the personification of activity, force, power, and determination.

A few moments after this, Lee mounted his gray horse and rode off to take his last farewell of his army, and to write those parting words that even to this day no men that wore the gray can read without tears. The war was over, and the brave men of the "lost cause," no longer enemies, were fellow-countrymen of the Northerners.

Sheridan had borne a great part in the battles that gave the Union its final victory and peace. But his work was not done; he had yet heavy duties to perform as an officer in peace.

## CHAPTER XXV

### SHERIDAN VS. LOUIS NAPOLEON

WHILE on his return march to Petersburg after the surrender, Sheridan learned of the assassination of Lincoln. He was deeply stirred by the untimely death of the great President.

Upon receiving the surrender of Lee's army, Grant had at once gone to Washington, stopped recruiting, and cut down the expenses of the army to as near a peace basis as was possible at that time. He ordered Sheridan to come there at once. Sheridan took the boat for Washington, and, upon his arrival, was assigned to command west of the Mississippi. This command embraced the whole of Mississippi and that part of Louisiana held by the enemy. His instructions from Grant were to compel the surrender of the Confederate forces in Texas and Louisiana in the shortest possible time, and to hold the Rio Grande with a strong force, whether the Confederates surrendered or not; and that no time was to be lost in getting there.

There was to be a grand review at Washington of the great armies that had participated in the war, on the 23rd and 24th of May, and Sheridan naturally wanted to stop and take part in it; but Grant's orders were imperative. A soldier cannot choose, he must obey; for obedience is the first law of an army. So

Sheridan, after fighting during the war, did not stop to visit his friends, and, without a chance to say good-by to the men who had served so faithfully under him and to whom he was much attached, set out at once for the scene of his new duties.

Before arriving at New Orleans, he learned that the Confederates in Louisiana and Texas had surrendered on the same terms that were given to Lee and Johnston. The surrender of these forces, however, was not carried out in good faith by the Confederates, especially by the Texas troops, who in several cases had, contrary to the terms of their surrender, marched off, taking their arms and camp equipage and, in some instances, their artillery with them, for the purpose of joining the Imperialists in Mexico.

The reason why Grant had instructed Sheridan to maintain a strong force on the Rio Grande, whether the Confederates surrendered or not, was that the French Emperor, Louis Napoleon, taking advantage of the war in which the United States was engaged, had landed an army in Mexico, overthrown the Mexican Republic, and established an empire with Maximilian, an Austrian prince, on its throne. Grant considered the establishment of this government an act of hostility, and a part of the rebellion itself. Every act of that empire established on American soil had been hostile to the government of the United States. Its rulers had allowed the Rio Grande to be an open port to those in rebellion. The Confederates had received arms, munitions, and other active assistance across the Mexican borders, and those who had surrendered

the United States were permitted to take refuge on Mexican soil, protected by French bayonets. To secure an honorable and permanent peace it was necessary for the French to be compelled to leave Mexico; and it was for the purpose of putting pressure upon the Imperialists that Grant had ordered Sheridan to occupy the line of the Rio Grande, which is the boundary line between the two countries.

Sheridan sent four of his most trusted scouts, the same who had served with him in the Army of the Potomac, to glean information about the ex-Confederates who had crossed the Rio Grande, and also to discover the movements of the Imperial forces. Feeling justified by the information that he gathered, Sheridan caused a demonstration to be made along the Rio Grande, and at the same time sent a demand for the return of arms and other munitions of war that had been turned over to the Imperial army by the ex-Confederates. This demand, together with the formidable display of force, caused consternation among the French troops, for they were aware of Sheridan's reputation as a fighter and inferred that he would not stand on the order of his coming and would strike hard when he came. They began preparations for the abandonment of northern Mexico, and, no doubt, if Sheridan had not been interfered with, they would have soon left for home with their whole army. But Mr. Seward, Secretary of State, contented himself with the return of some of the contraband artillery and profuse apologies from the Imperial authorities. The opportunity for crossing the Rio Grande, for which,



under the circumstances, there was the best excuse, was lost. The Imperialists' cause was strengthened, till about the whole of Mexico fell under their dominion.

Sheridan was very impatient of this dilatory, drag-a-cat-by-the-tail slowness of Mr. Seward's method of dealing, which seemed to strengthen rather than weaken the Imperialists' control in Mexico, and determined to make another demonstration, to scare at least some of the French conceit out of them. With this purpose he went to San Antonio, a town on the Rio Grande, and ostentatiously drew up Merritt's cavalry and the Fifth Corps for review, making thus an impressive show. There were many present to see this review, and the rumor flew like wildfire that Sheridan was about to cross the Rio Grande and invade Mexico. To give still greater color to this rumor, escorted by a regiment of cavalry he hastened to Fort Duncan, which is just opposite the Mexican town of Pierras Nabras, and there made inquiries about getting forage on the other side of the Rio Grande. At the same time he opened communications with Juarez, the President of the Mexican Republic. This seemed to corroborate the report that he was about to move his troops across the border.

This encouraged the Mexican Republican or liberal leaders, and they collected an army to restore the Republic. Further to encourage them, arms were left by Sheridan to fall conveniently into their hands. The Republic was about to get on its feet and stand alone. The alarmed Imperialists withdrew their army from

about all of northern Mexico as far down as Monterey. Had Sheridan been allowed to continue his policy of bluff, the foreign invaders would no doubt have left Mexico.

The French Minister in Washington complained to Mr. Seward that Sheridan was violating the neutrality that he had promised should be observed, and this letter was sent to Sheridan by the Secretary of State with directions to preserve that neutrality. Of course this put a stop to his showing further sympathy with the Republic of Mexico.

These proceedings at Washington tired and disgusted Sheridan and his army. The troops, as well as the general, knew that large organized bodies of ex-Confederate troops had crossed the Rio Grande to assist the Imperialists, and that there was on foot a scheme by which the dissatisfied Southerners were to colonize Mexico, and lend their support to seat Maximilian more firmly on his throne. The Imperialists, to encourage this scheme of colonizing Mexico, promised large grants of land and titles of nobility to the Southerners, and also began to institute a system of peonage, which, in effect, was equivalent to establishing slavery in Mexico, as another bait for the Southerners. Commissioners were appointed, among them Generals Magruder and Price, in each of the Southern States, to promote immigration. Sheridan informed General Grant of the progress of this scheme, who nipped it in the bud by prohibiting the embarkation of any person from the ports of Texas or Louisiana without a permit from Sheridan's headquarters.

Juarez, the Republican President, having meanwhile organized a good-sized army supplied with rifles and munitions of war from the American side of the Rio Grande with the knowledge of Sheridan, soon was in possession of not only the whole line of the Rio Grande, but nearly the whole of Mexico. The empire of Maximilian, resting upon French bayonets, began to totter.

In the distress of Maximilian, his wife, Carlotta, was sent to plead with Louis Napoleon for help to sustain him on the throne. But the French Emperor had already given orders for the withdrawal of his army from Mexico. Louis Napoleon, undoubtedly, would have liked to stay, but he preferred going peacefully, to being driven out, as he knew he soon would be. As my readers all know, after the withdrawal of the French army Maximilian, with constancy and courage worthy of a better cause, stuck to his throne until the spring of 1867, when he was taken prisoner by the Mexican Republicans, and was tried and executed.

It is doubtful if this result would have been accomplished without the presence of Sheridan and his army on the Rio Grande. His mere presence and sympathy with the Republic had destroyed the empire instituted by the French despot, Louis Napoleon, who had betrayed the republic of France and was anxious for the downfall of the great American republic.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### SHERIDAN AND RECONSTRUCTION

IN addition to his military duties along the Rio Grande, Sheridan found himself drawn into the political war which was waged over the manner in which states lately in rebellion should come back to their places in the Union.

You will remember that the deep-lying cause of the war was the disagreement of opinion as to whether a state might, of its own will, quit the Union of States. After years of discussion, some of it very bitter and hot, the Southern states made the appeal to arms for a settlement of this question and in that terrible court were defeated. When, therefore, by the stern arbitrament of war, it was decided that a state could not secede from the Union, it was quite natural for those most concerned to say that what *could* not be done *had* not been done and, therefore, they were back in the Union in their old standing, except that slavery was abolished. They held that the states lately in rebellion were simply restored. But those who had poured out blood and treasure for the preservation of the Union held that certain safeguards against future rebellion were needed and required that the government of those states should be reconstructed before their people could be full citizens again.

This question of restoration or reconstruction, which could have been managed by President Lincoln acceptably to both parties, was thrown into the greatest confusion by his death. In Texas and Louisiana there was such an outbreak of hostilities that General Sheridan was compelled to interfere in the interests of peace.

At the time of the surrender of the Confederates in Texas and Louisiana, the government of the United States had made no plan by which the states lately in rebellion were to be governed. A provisional government, however, had been set up in Louisiana as early as 1864, which, though favored by Mr. Lincoln, had not been sanctioned by Congress. The ex-Confederates, who had been restored to citizenship by a proclamation issued by President Johnson, soon boldly assumed control of the state. The legislature, as well as many of the offices of the state and city, were in their hands. They began to make laws discriminating against the freedmen by enforcing labor contracts which, if allowed, would have reduced them to partial slavery again. Meanwhile, outrages, violence, and even murders of the former slaves, to intimidate and force them to work for their former masters and to keep them from voting, prevailed.

To remedy this shocking condition of affairs, those who had established the government of 1864 proposed to reassemble the convention and remodel the constitution of the State. As Congress had not sanctioned this provisional government of 1864, it had, of course, no legal status; but Sheridan and his soldiers could not



interfere with the action of its officers until they had committed some overt or criminal act. A proclamation, however, to call together the convention was issued, and on the 30th of July they met in Mechanics' Hall in New Orleans. It was claimed that, the evening before, the friends of this convention had made inflammatory speeches. But this statement must be taken with allowance, as any talk that favored the colored people did not agree with the ex-Confederates and their wishes.

After the so-called convention of 'July 30 was assembled, the mayor of New Orleans sent the police to suppress the meeting. The police, first killing several men on the street who were formed in procession, forced the doors of Mechanics' Hall and fired on the assembly, killing about forty men and wounding one hundred and sixty. This massacre of blacks and whites was done under pretense of keeping order, by a police made up of men who had formerly been in arms against the United States.

Upon Sheridan's arrival he investigated the circumstances of these wholesale murders, reported them to Grant, and placed the city under martial law. Grant laid this report before the President, and then sent Sheridan this dispatch: "Continue to enforce martial law so far as it may be necessary to preserve the peace; and do not allow any of the civil authorities to act, if you deem such action dangerous."

A military commission which investigated the circumstances of this massacre reported, "There has been no occasion during our national history where a

riot has occurred so destitute of justifiable cause, resulting in a massacre so inhuman and fiend-like, as that which took place at New Orleans on the 30th of July."

President Johnson published a part of Sheridan's letter, which the latter criticised as a "garbled version;" thenceforth Johnson was Sheridan's enemy.

This savage outbreak in New Orleans, and the fear that the ignorant and helpless freedmen would, if not protected, be practically enslaved again and the fruits of a costly war be lost, greatly strengthened the reconstruction policy.

The reconstruction acts passed by Congress provided for "the more efficient government of the rebel states." It divided these states into military districts, each district to be commanded by an officer not below the rank of brigadier-general, and made it the duty of that officer to protect the rights of all persons and property and to suppress insurrection, violence, and disorder. At the same time it gave him the power to organize a military commission for the suppression of crime or disorder. It also provided that when the people of these states had framed a constitution in conformity with the Constitution of the United States, and had adopted the Amendments to the Constitution that had recently been made, then, with the approval of Congress, those states should be entitled to send Representatives to Congress.

After the passage of these laws Sheridan was assigned to the Fifth Military District, which embraced the same territory that he had had charge of since the

close of the war. In commanding this territory Sheridan laid down a rule for the government of his own conduct: it was non-interference with the state and city governments so long as their action did not conflict with the laws.

He was, however, soon obliged to interfere in municipal matters in New Orleans. The mayor and several officials took upon themselves to declare the reconstruction acts of Congress unconstitutional, and to ignore and refuse to obey the law. Sheridan, therefore, removed them from office and appointed Edward W. Heath as mayor. His reasons for these removals were that the mayor had incited the massacre; that the attorney-general was trying to punish the victims instead of the murderers; and that the judge of the criminal court used his position to bring about the massacre, by making it appear that no one would be tried for the deeds done in it.

This vigorous action of Sheridan's was the keynote of his administration. He issued orders for those who were qualified to vote under the reconstruction laws to register between May 1 and June 30. Adjutant-General Thomas directing him in a dispatch not to close the registration until the 1st of August, Sheridan asked Grant if this was to be considered as a mandatory order coming from the President. In reply Grant said: "Enforce your own construction of the military bill until ordered to do otherwise. The opinion of the attorney-general has not been distributed to the district commanders in language or order entitling it to the form of an order, nor can I

suppose that the President intended it to have such force." Sheridan kept open the books of registration until the 31st of July.

John A. Walker was charged with shooting a negro in the parish of Saint John. The civil authorities, instead of arresting him, connived at his escape. There were several similar instances. Sheridan believed that it was the purpose of the ex-Confederates to frighten and intimidate the colored men in order to keep them from voting and to compel them to make contracts to work for their former masters. The trial and conviction of Walker, which he brought about, put a stop to this "bulldozing," as it was termed.

The legislature had passed an act requiring a residence qualification for the policemen of New Orleans. The evident purpose of this was to exclude Union soldiers who had taken up their residence in New Orleans from being policemen. Most of the police were ex-Confederate soldiers. Sheridan did not object to this, but he did object to their preventing the freedmen from registering as voters and to a system of intimidation inaugurated by them. When Sheridan discovered the misuse of their office by the police, he annulled the law which required a five years' residence before being able to serve on the force. This enabled the mayor to organize the force anew and appoint about one-half of it from ex-Union soldiers.

This put an end to intimidation of the poor ex-slaves. All of Sheridan's sympathies were with the weak and down-trodden freedmen. Their freedom had been given them by the nation, and he believed they

should be protected from the bitter political resentments that beset them and be given a fair chance.

Another illustration of the way that Sheridan used his power as a military commander is seen when the legislature appropriated \$4,000,000 to repair the levees, that were so badly broken that the waters of the Mississippi were doing great damage to the agricultural interests of Louisiana. This money was to be distributed by a commission then in existence. But the law which created this board would expire in the spring of 1867. The legislature got around this difficulty by passing a bill to continue the board. Governor Wells kept this bill until the legislature adjourned and thus prevented its becoming a law; and then, without either law or reason, appointed a board of his own to distribute the money. This board the old commission refused to recognize.

Sheridan, seeing that the quarrel would prevent the much needed work on the levees from being done, appointed a new commission that would do the work and distribute the money honestly. The legislature was willing that this should be done, but the governor requested the President to revoke Sheridan's order. The Secretary of War directed him to make a report of all proceedings in the matter. As was to be expected, Sheridan did not mince matters but told the truth, in substance as I have given it here, and bluntly added: "Governor Wells is a political trickster and a dishonest man. I have seen him, myself, when I came to this command, turn out all the Union men who had supported the Government and put in their stead rebel



soldiers who had not doffed their gray uniforms. . . . I have watched him since, and his conduct is as sinuous as the mark left in the dust by the movement of a snake. I say again he is dishonest, and that dishonesty is more than must be expected of me." The same day that he made this report, determined that he would not bear any longer with one who was obstructing in every possible way the reorganization of the civil government of the state, he removed Governor Wells from office.

The disloyal element, especially its newspapers and politicians, were bitterly opposed to Sheridan's acts. These agitators condemned everybody connected with the Congressional plan of reconstruction, and as the President and Congress were at sword's points with each other, the President took sides with rather than against those who opposed Sheridan. When, at last, Sheridan removed from office the controller and the treasurer of the city,—who had already issued a quarter of a million of illegal certificates,—and with them twenty-two aldermen and other officials who had been parties to illegal proceedings and who had reduced the credit and financial affairs of New Orleans to a disorderly condition and were also hindering reconstruction, the anger of his political adversaries knew no bounds.

Later Sheridan issued an order, dated August 24, 1867, declaring the registration of voters complete and that no person not registered in accordance with law should be considered as a duly qualified voter of the state. Upon the promulgation of this order the

President removed General Sheridan from duty and his connection with reconstruction politics ceased.

During his whole career as a military commander, whatever else may be said of him, Sheridan acted the part of an honest, brave soldier. His fault was, from a politician's standpoint, that he would not temporize with dishonest methods or men. He was glad to be relieved from such an uncongenial task and to be assigned to a position more in keeping with a soldier's duties. He undoubtedly made mistakes that a more politic man would not have made; but, as a whole, history will justify his rule as commander of the Fifth Military District.

In 1875, when the "White League" was so full of menace and danger, President Grant was induced to send him to New Orleans again to suppress disorder. His mere presence there was sufficient to cause submission, sullen though it was. It is praise to say that all disloyal elements and disorderly ones hated and feared him. He showed here, as in all other positions of responsibility, that he was capable and honest, and time has justified his motives if not his judgment.

From 1867 until his death Sheridan remained clear of political entanglements.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### CAMPAIGNING AGAINST THE INDIANS

IN September, 1867, Major-General Sheridan was assigned by the General-in-Chief to command the Department of Missouri. His new command was one of great responsibilities, involving as it did, heavy conflicts with the Indians as well as the execution of a policy designed to prevent hindrances to the settlement of the country and the building of railroads, which the presence of antagonistic and strong tribes was creating.

When the Civil War closed, there was not a mile of railroad north of Jefferson City and west of the Missouri River,—certainly not outside of California. When Sheridan was transferred to this Department, the Union and Pacific Railroads were nearing their junction in Utah, and hundreds of miles of other railroads had been put in operation. The Indians had become restless and dissatisfied because of the building of the Pacific Railroad through their hunting grounds and the coming of settlers into eastern Colorado just after the war. The protection of these roads and of the construction parties at work on them, as well as the protection of the settlers, were a part of Sheridan's duties.

At the time he took command of the Department

there was comparative quiet there, though just previously the Indians had murdered isolated settlers, attacked surveying and construction parties engaged in building the Kansas Pacific Railroad, plundered stage stations, and raided emigrant trains. As the general's health had been somewhat impaired by the climate of Louisiana, Sheridan took a leave of absence of several months to recuperate before entering upon active duties, leaving Colonel A. J. Smith in command of the Department.

Upon his return to duty a delegation of prominent chiefs called on him and proposed a conference. Sheridan would not consent to this, as Peace Commissioners had made a treaty with the Cheyennes, Arapahoes, Kiowas, and Comanches, at Medicine Lodge, in which they, in substance, agreed to relinquish the country to white settlement, allow the peaceful construction of the Pacific Railroad, and go to a reservation in the Indian Territory. As Sheridan's refusal left them without hopes of obtaining any better terms than were already granted them, the young men defiantly denounced the treaty and became saucy and turbulent. Sheridan foresaw that unless he could in some way soothe their irritation, they would be on the war-path when the buffalo returned to their feeding ground in the spring.

The lives of the settlers would be endangered if hostilities were resumed, and therefore, to keep the Indians quiet, Sheridan supplied them with abundant food and tried to placate them by sending among them certain men who knew their language, had lived

and hunted with them, and who had their confidence. These men were Mr. William Comstock, Mr. Abner Grover, and Mr. Richard Parr. They were placed under the charge of Lieutenant Beecher, with instructions to make every effort to prevent hostilities and to keep Lieutenant Beecher posted as to conditions among the different tribes.

In August Sheridan's hopes of continued tranquillity were rudely shattered. A party of Cheyenne Indians had made an attack or raid on some friendly Kaws who were peacefully living near Council Grove, stolen their horses, and robbed the houses of white settlers. Directly after this the Comanches and Kiowas came to get their annuities, and were also expecting to get arms and ammunition. They were refused them until they had made reparation for their raid upon the friendly Kaw Indians.

The Indians then went to General Alfred Sully, who was in command of the District of Arkansas and who had great experience with them, and made him believe that it was only a few bad young men that had committed these depredations, and that if he would issue arms to them, they would in future hold these wild young fellows in check. Sully, thinking that he could thus prevent hostilities, delivered the arms and annuities to the crafty Indians.

The issue of these arms was a great mistake, for even while these Indian diplomats were persuading Sully, their warriors were on a raid of rapine and murder among the settlers of Saline Valley, about thirty miles from the post where General Sully was



stationed. Here, pretending to be indignant because hot coffee, to which the unsuspecting settlers had treated them, had been served them in tin cups, they threw the coffee in the faces of those who had treated them, made prisoners of the men, and inflicted indignities upon the women too horrid to relate. The arrival of some of these unfortunates at Fort Harker was the first intimation received by the military that hostilities had commenced.

Leaving the Saline Valley, this war-party crossed to the Solomon Valley, where the people, not knowing that the Indians were on the war-path, treated them hospitably and even gave them ammunition. In return the Indians murdered thirteen men and two women, committing horrible outrages and carrying away as prisoners two little girls, who were never heard from again.

Rumors of these murders and outrages having reached Lieutenant Beecher, he sent Comstock and Grover to a camp of Cheyennes whose chief, Turkey Leg, had been a great friend of Comstock's; they had hunted together and lived in the same camp, and it was thought that Comstock would have sufficient influence to keep them from the war-path. But they met with a chilly reception, and were ordered out of the village. Under pretense that they were sent to protect them, they were accompanied when they left by several young men. They had not gone far, however, when in the midst of a friendly talk two of the young Indians fell behind the party and fired on the whites. Comstock was killed at the first volley, but Grover,

sheltering himself behind his friend's dead body, fought the seven Indians with his long-range rifle. When night came, though desperately wounded he reached a ravine, and got to Fort Wallace two days after, exhausted and frantic from the pain of his wounds.

Simultaneously with these occurrences, outrages, murders, and pillaging began all along the upper Arkansas River and the head-waters of the Cimarron, and it was no longer doubtful that a general Indian war had begun. The leaders in this mischief were principally the Cheyennes and the Kiowas. Some of the Arapahoes remained friendly, but their young men were on the war-path with the hostiles. The four tribes could put on the war-path about six thousand warriors. As it would be no child's play to subdue these tribes, Sheridan transferred his headquarters to a military post known as Fort Hays, near the seat of trouble.

At the time of which I write (1868) there were vast herds of buffalo covering these Plains, which, during the summer months, afforded abundant food for the Indians, enabling them to continue on the war-path without troubling themselves about subsistence. Sheridan, with that genius of perception for which he was distinguished, saw that this was the key to the problem of subduing the Indians, and, notwithstanding many protests of old Indian fighters, resolved on a winter campaign against them as the only sure way of bringing hostilities quickly to a close.

The reader will see how difficult a problem he had

to solve, when I explain that Sheridan had only 2600 men with which to protect emigrant trains, railroad construction parties, and the settlers, besides garrisoning all the posts. This left but a small movable column with which to operate against the Indians.

It was very difficult to obtain scouts, but a few good ones were at last obtained. Among these was William F. Cody (Buffalo Bill), who is now known to most American boys. His first service was rendered when Sheridan wished to send important orders to Fort Dodge, ninety-five miles south from his headquarters. It was a dangerous route. Several couriers had been killed, and it seemed impossible to get any one to carry a message. Though Cody had just been on a long and dangerous trip, he saddled a fresh horse and, halting but once on his way, rode 350 miles in less than sixty hours. On his return he informed Sheridan where the Indian villages would be likely to be found in winter, but thought that they would contain only old men and women while the warriors continued their raids north of the Arkansas River.

Many fights occurred between the troops and these marauders, but the most thrilling of these preliminary encounters was made by Colonel George Forsyth, who was one of Sheridan's aides during the Civil War. He had organized a party of less than fifty scouts, and on the 17th of September while near the Republican River with forty of these, seven hundred Indian warriors came suddenly upon his party. With Forsyth

were Surgeon J. H. Moore and Lieutenant Beecher. With the quick decision of a veteran soldier, Forsyth, seeing that the only chance for life was to make a defense, took refuge on a small island in the Arickaree River, with a channel only a foot deep on one side and on the other completely dry. Here they threw up shallow rifle-pits for defense, determined to fight to the death.

The savages, confident that they could easily capture or kill the whole party, drew up their horses in imposing array and formed for the attack. They were led by a gigantic chief called Roman Nose and were all of them naked and painted. With one hand on their bridles and the other grasping their rifles, with terrible war-whoops they dashed on the little band of whites to ride over and annihilate them with one grand charge. They were met with such a destructive fire from the well-aimed repeating rifles of Forsyth's men that the first charge was checked and many of the savages killed. Forsyth was desperately wounded at this first charge but still coolly continued to direct the defense. The Indians charged again and again with the same result, and with the loss of many of their warriors, as attested by the mourning cries of hundreds of their women and children on a near-by hill viewing the fight. Of the little party of defenders, Beecher was killed, Surgeon Moore mortally wounded Forsyth three times desperately wounded, and several others of the scouts killed. The whole number of the killed and wounded was in all twenty-one out of a party of forty-seven. Many of the Indian warriors



### THE PONY EXPRESS.

Drawn by F. Colburn Clarke. From "The Great Salt Lake Trail," by courtesy of Crane & Co., Publishers.





had been killed, among them the chief, Roman Nose, and their medicine man.

The hot sun made it terrible for the wounded, and the party of whites had little to eat except the flesh of their dead horses. The Indians finally gave up charging them and, dismounting, began a siege, thinking to starve out their enemies. But though suffering from wounds and almost hopeless of escape, the survivors kept up the defense until the Indians, despairing of capturing or destroying them, began to draw off. Forsyth's men managed to live four days longer, when a column of troops from Fort Wallace came to their relief; for during the first of the three days' fight Forsyth had sent two men (Stilwell and Truesdell) through the Indian lines, and these had brought the much-needed relief.

By the beginning of November Sheridan had completed his preparations for a winter's campaign. To insure energetic action and to see that the different columns were properly conducted, Sheridan went in person with the main column, which had for its objective the Indians who had fled to the head-waters of the Red River. This force was made up of the Nineteenth Kansas Volunteer Cavalry and eleven troops of regular cavalry commanded by the gallant General Custer; also five companies of infantry commanded by Major Page.

In conjunction with this column two others were to march into the Indian Territory. One was composed of six troops of the Third Cavalry and two companies of infantry under Colonel Evans, and the other of six

troops of the Fifth Cavalry commanded by General Carr.

The different columns having been set in motion on the 15th of November, under circumstances that would have discouraged almost any one but Sheridan from undertaking a winter campaign, he started for Fort Supply to give them personal attention. On his first night out a blizzard blew away the tents, and the only shelter that Sheridan, shivering with wet and cold, could find for the night was under a wagon. On the 21st he arrived at Fort Supply, in a snow-storm that had been raging for twenty-four hours.

Generals Sully and Custer with their troops had arrived, but Colonel Crawford with the Kansas troops had not put in an appearance. Without delay, Sheridan ordered the working parties to be called in, and on the 23d Custer was instructed to strike a trail that had been discovered, which Sheridan was convinced was that of a war-party that had come from the Washita.

In a severe snow-storm Custer started out, and encamped the first night fifteen miles from his point of departure. The weather the next day was clear and cold, but the heavy wind had blown away the snow on the high land so that the trail could be traced. After getting the wagons across the Canadian River, the Indian scouts came in saying that they had discovered a fresh trail, which indicated that the war-party was returning to the villages. In the early morning of the 27th the scouts reported that they had found a large herd of ponies in a valley. Custer with

his officers made a reconnaissance by dismounting and creeping to a little elevation; by moonlight they saw the village of the Indians.

Custer decided to attack at daybreak by approaching it from all sides. The plan having been explained, at early light the party closed in around the village, and then at a signal charged at a gallop on the sleeping savages. Although completely surprised, after the first confusion the savages rallied and fought desperately, firing from behind trees and from the river banks as a shelter. Finally, after their chief, Black Kettle, and over a hundred of his warriors had been killed, the entire village was captured, with fifty women and children. Several Indians had, however, escaped and informed the rest of the hostile Indians of what had occurred. A party that had under Major Elliott gone in pursuit of the escaping young warriors, was killed, though their fate was not known until later.

While Custer was burning the village and securing the herd of ponies, thousands of Indians had collected and it was a question what he should do. He shot all of the ponies, kept up a fight with the savages until night came, and then got back to Fort Supply.

Although this victory was calculated to demoralize the Indians, hard work was yet to be done before they should be conquered. Crawford with his Kansas troops, in undertaking to reach Sheridan by a direct route, had lost most of his horses and men; and though a few of the men finally got to Fort Supply with their commander they were of little use.

On the 7th of December Sheridan, taking personal command, started out through the deep snow and with the temperature below zero towards the Wichita Mountains. The second day they encountered vast herds of buffalo, which were followed by a band of wolves. Antelope were so tame that they sometimes came into camp and were captured by the men.

Through storms and blizzards they at last reached the Washita, within six miles of Custer's fight, and then began a search to find out what had become of the Elliott party. The poor fellows were found dead in a circle, horribly mutilated, with little piles of empty cartridge shells near each body, which showed they had made a most desperate fight.

From here they rode down the Washita to the sites of the abandoned Indian villages, and at the Kiowa village found the body of a young white woman and her child, who had been taken prisoners the previous summer by the brutal Satanta and finally murdered.

On the 12th of December Sheridan marched out from his comfortable camp, following a trail. Another snow-storm came up, which made it very difficult for the guides to find the way; then a fog obscured all landmarks; but at last, still keeping to the trail, with the weather below zero at times, and at others encountering furious snow-storms, they at last came to a place that indicated that they were nearing some Indian villages. On the 18th, after a march of a few miles, some Indians appeared with a white flag and bearing a letter from General Hazen, saying that he



was carrying on negotiations with the Indians and that all the tribes between Sheridan and Fort Cobb were friendly.

The Indians at hand, as well as the Comanches and Kiowas, were thus placed practically under the protection of the Indian Department of the United States, and Sheridan gave up his intention to attack. Sheridan told the representatives of the Kiowas that if they would come into Fort Cobb and give themselves up, he would heed the letter of General Hazen, which proved, afterwards, to have been obtained by trickery and fraud by the chiefs Satanta and Lone Wolf.

After several days of delay and bad faith, Sheridan, by threatening to hang Lone Wolf and Satanta, persuaded their tribes to come in according to their agreement. But he had first to issue an order for their execution before these chiefs sent out runners with a message imploring their people to save their lives. This resulted in their coming into the post. Sheridan was afterwards sorry that he had not hanged these chiefs, for several years afterwards both were guilty of horrible murders and atrocities in Texas.

All of the Comanches were now in Sheridan's hands but one small party, which had fled. This band, which was made up of desperate outcasts and very bad Indians, was finally practically annihilated by Evans, who, in the cold and snow on Christmas Day came upon their village, captured most of the women and children, killed twenty-five warriors in the fight, and destroyed all their property.

This sudden attack in midwinter caused the Arapahoes and Cheyennes, whose children and women were suffering and complaining, to enter into negotiations through their chiefs, Little Robe and Yellow Bear, for terms of peace. While these negotiations were pending, Sheridan began establishing a new military post not far from the base of the Wichita Mountains, so as to keep an oversight in future on the Kiowas and Comanches. This post he named Fort Sill, after his classmate who was killed at Stone River. Here he required all the Indians to go until they were settled permanently.

There was, however, much trouble in getting the Cheyennes there. Finally Sheridan started Custer with forty picked men and with Yellow Bear and Little Robe for interpreters and guides, with instructions to give them a good thrashing or compel them to submit. The Cheyennes could not be found, and Custer was compelled to return to save his party from perishing.

In February, 1869, Sheridan had begun to make preparations for another expedition by Custer for the same purpose, and prepared to establish a new depot to feed the command. For the purpose of making these arrangements in person he returned to Fort Supply, where, much to his surprise, he received a dispatch from General Grant ordering him to Washington, and informing him that on the day of his inauguration as President, he had commissioned him as Lieutenant-General of the Army of the United States. Upon Sheridan's arrival in Washington the President

desired him to go to New Orleans to take command there. But Sheridan did not like this, and so Grant appointed him to command the Division of Missouri in place of General Sherman, whom he had made General of the Army.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### SHERIDAN VIEWS THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR

SHERIDAN at once assumed command of his Military Division, with his headquarters in Chicago. In this city he became a social favorite, on account of his personal qualities as well as for the distinguished position he occupied.

My young readers may suppose that because he was now lieutenant-general, he would have an easy time. But the duties of such a position required work enough to satisfy the ambition of any man competent to fill it. He had not been in the office long before he saw that, in order to inform himself of the needs of the different posts, it would be needful for him to make an inspection tour of all of the military posts of the Rocky Mountain region. So, in May, 1870, he began this duty, taking passage by stagecoach at Corinne Station for Helena, and riding about five hundred miles by this conveyance.

Upon his return he found that war between Prussia and France had begun, and, wishing to observe the conflict, he obtained the necessary leave and began preparations at once for his journey. Before sailing for Europe, he visited, by invitation, President Grant.

“Which army,” inquired Grant, “do you desire to accompany?”

"The German army," said Sheridan, "because I think it will be the successful side, and more can be seen there."

This decision pleased Grant very much, for he had but a small opinion of Louis Napoleon. Before he left Grant gave him a letter commending him to all representatives of the United States, and introducing him to the representatives of other governments as one of the most brave and skillful soldiers of the late war.

On the 27th of July, 1870, he sailed from New York, accompanied by General James Forsyth as aide-de-camp. In Berlin Mr. George Bancroft, the American Minister, met him with a telegram from Count Bismarck, saying that he was expected to come to the headquarters of King William. The Queen also sent word offering him an opportunity to pay his respects; but Sheridan asked to be excused from the visit, as important events were expected soon to take place at the front. He proceeded at once to Romilly, where he took passage in a hay-cart to the little city of Pont-à-Mousson. This place he found so crowded with German officers and men that he had trouble in finding lodging and food. Here Count Bismarck received him cordially, inquiring with some concern which side the people of the United States blamed for bringing on the war.

It was the night before the battle of Gravelotte, and Sheridan expressed a desire to see the battle. So it was arranged that Sheridan should be on hand at four o'clock the next morning, to go with Bismarck to the field and be introduced to the King. Sheridan was on



hand at the early hour agreed upon and rode with Bismarck in his wagon to Mars-la-Tour, where they found an aide-de-camp ready to take him to the King. His Majesty received him with both hands extended in welcome, and was very gracious and pleasant; though as neither spoke the language of the other the conversation was extremely brief, and was carried on through an interpreter. It ended by King William's inviting him to stay at his headquarters during the campaign.

The place selected to see the battle was on some high land, which was the center of the battle-field of Mars-la-Tour, a battle which had been fought the day before and where some of the dead still remained unburied. Here he was presented to General Von Moltke, who spoke English fluently, and who explained to Sheridan the positions of the German corps and the movements taking place.

The battle was opened by the German artillery all along the line, to which the French artillery, when the German infantry moved to attack, responded with a fire so destructive that General Von Steinmartz ordered his cavalry to charge on the French, who were posted along a sunken road. The charge met with a most deadly reception, and the Germans were slaughtered in a terrible manner. The rear ranks pushing the front ranks into the deep cut, an orderly retreat was impossible. Von Steinmartz was so much blamed that Sheridan thought he would be relieved from his command. But Sheridan saw the old veteran go with bowed head to the King, by whom he was kindly re-

ceived. Sheridan, however, thought the charge a very foolish piece of business. After this a German corps, led by General Von Moltke himself, charged and decided the battle with victory for the Germans.

When, accompanied by Bismarck, Sheridan rejoined the King, he found his Majesty surrounded by a crowd of fugitives, to whom he was talking in such an emphatic way that he afterwards declared it reminded him of the Dutch swearing he used to hear when he was a boy in Ohio.

It was not long before the French army fell back, leaving the Prussian army in possession of the battlefield.

During the entire day Sheridan had had nothing to eat or drink, for the immense armies had not only eaten up all the food but had drunk up all the water in the wells. The brother of the King took him aside and, taking a piece of stale bread from his coat-tail pocket, shared it with him.

As Sheridan was riding back alone to the village, he was halted by some German soldiers, who mistook him for a French officer. As he could speak no German and they could speak no English, and he did not dare speak French, the crisis was acute, especially when one of the soldiers took off Sheridan's cap and pronounced it French. It is doubtful if they would not have killed him then and there, if an officer from the King's headquarters had not come up and rescued him. There was a great laugh at headquarters over the incident; but the King, recognizing that it would

have been no laughing matter if an American officer of his high rank had been killed, wrote him a pass to prevent similar mistakes in future.

As all the buildings were occupied, it was with greatest difficulty that the American general found lodging in a loft, which was reached by a ladder, the first floor being occupied by wounded soldiers. The next morning Bismarck begged some coffee of the King's escort and bought two eggs. Sheridan cornered a sutler's wagon, which, though nearly sold out, still had four large bologna sausages which he bought for a good price. This was their breakfast, and they were fortunate to get one as good.

Sheridan and Bismarck then visited the battle-field. The sight at the sunken way, where the German cavalry charged, was awful even for an experienced soldier like Sheridan. There were hundreds of dead men and horses. Going in another direction he saw the plain covered with the helmets of the German soldiers. Inside the French fort he saw that the terrific artillery fire, which the Germans had thought so destructive, had done but little injury.

The disaster to the right wing of the French army had caused them to fall back to Metz. Sheridan, following with Bismarck, found the roads so obstructed with wagons that the Count, being unable to make the teamsters obey his orders in any other way, jumped from his carriage with his pistol in hand, and drove them right and left, saying as he again took his seat, "It is very undignified, but it is the only way." This makes the writer think that army teamsters must be

alike the world over, for he has witnessed similar scenes in the Union army.

Shortly after this Sheridan dined with the King. There were many distinguished personages present. Bismarck, sitting next to King William, acted as interpreter when the King addressed the American general. His inquiries were principally about Grant's Vicksburg campaign.

On arriving at Commercy, whither the King had moved, General Sheridan found that his quarters had been already chosen for him and his name marked in chalk on the door of a house belonging to a notary, who was pleased that he did not have to entertain the German officers. In explanation I will say that an army in Europe does not carry its provisions with it, but makes the people of the country through which it passes furnish food and lodging to its soldiers. So offensive was this practice to our forefathers that they made it a part of the Constitution that "No soldier shall, in time of peace, be quartered in any house without the consent of the owner; nor in time of war, but in a manner prescribed by law." Thus in a march the foreign army carry no food and are burdened with no trains, except their ammunition and bridge trains. They also have macadamized roads to march over and not dusty roads or oceans of deep mud to wallow through.

At Clermont, Sheridan was quartered with an apothecary who had lived in this country, and who claimed Sheridan as his guest and entertained him with his best. Count Bismarck was not so fortunate,

as he had only a little room with but two chairs, a feather bed and a table, at which Sheridan found him at work writing. Nothing seemed, however, to disturb or to discomfort the "Iron Chancellor."

At Grand Pré, Sheridan again dined with King William. At the table much surprise was expressed at the blunder of the French in marching along the Belgian frontiers.

As another battle seemed impending, the next morning Sheridan went to the front. About ten o'clock the Germans advanced against a strong position held by the French, while another part of their army turned their right flank and compelled them to fall back. Then their center advanced and surprised one of the French divisions just as its men were eating their breakfast; for afterwards some of the men were seen dead with pieces of bread in their hands, instead of muskets.

Sheridan was also present at the battle of Sedan and witnessed the surrender of the French Emperor. When he had arrived at a village called Chavanges, he mounted his horse and rode to a hill whence he could see the movements of both armies. Southeast of Sedan was the village of Razeilles. This place was attacked by the Germans and defended by the French with great stubbornness, as it was of much importance in the defense of Sedan. It yielded only after a street-to-street fight, and when its houses were knocked to pieces. Its possession gave the German army an almost continuous line to the east of Sedan, almost to the Belgian frontiers. The French were



driven through Floing, and as the ground was an open plain, Sheridan had a good view of the battle that preceded the surrender.

While the Germans were deploying for battle, he saw an attack made by the French cavalry. The Germans received them with a destructive fire and compelled them to retire. The French charged again and again with great courage, and with a loss of hundreds of horses and men, but to no purpose; for the survivors fell back in disorder. Sheridan thought it very brave—but foolish. At three o'clock in the afternoon, firing having ceased, the Germans sent an officer with a dispatch demanding the surrender of the French.

Sheridan remarked to Bismarck, "I think you will catch Napoleon as one of your prizes here."

"Oh, no," said Bismarck, "he's too cautious to be caught in such a trap."

But it turned out that Sheridan was right, for when Colonel Von Bronsart, who carried the dispatch, returned, he brought the intelligence that Louis Napoleon was in the town. Soon after this an officer with a white flag came from Sedan, bearing this message from the Emperor: "Not being able to die in the midst of my troops, there is nothing left for me but to place my sword in your Majesty's hands."

Afterwards, while Sheridan was conversing with a German officer who had served in the Union army during the Civil War, there came from the city gate a carriage in which were seated the Emperor of the French and three other men. Thinking there might be something worth seeing, Sheridan followed the

carriage until it halted under some trees inside the German lines. Bismarck came up and, saluting the Emperor, said something in so abrupt a manner that Louis Napoleon gave a start of alarm. After a moment's conversation Bismarck and the Emperor went into a little cottage near at hand, belonging to a weaver. After a time they came out again and were seated outside, where they talked for an hour or more. It was then that the terms for the surrender of Sedan were made. They were very humiliating for the French, who, however, were beaten and had no choice.

After this the German army followed on to Paris with little opposition, and by the 14th of September their army was within twenty-eight miles of Paris. At Rheims a German soldier was wounded by being fired upon from a window. As this place is the center of the champagne district, it gave the Germans an excuse to levy on the town for several hundred bottles of its wine.

While the principal German armies were in the vicinity of Paris, Sheridan, accompanied by Forsyth, endeavored to get a good view of the French from the German picket line. Accompanied by a guide who rode ahead just far enough to escape trouble himself and to alarm the French, the general was saluted by rifle fire every time the French saw him. Afterwards, in attempting to get back by a shorter route, he came upon a German picket. The soldiers leveled their muskets at him and called upon him to surrender. He at once dismounted and reached for his pass. The soldiers thought he was reaching for his revolver;

but as they were on the point of firing, he threw up his hands. The officer of the guard came up, examined his pass, and conducted him to the commandant; but it was a close call.

On learning that the investment of Paris was about complete, he started for Versailles on the 22d and took quarters at the Hotel Reservoir, where he found Generals Burnside and Hazen of the United States army, and also several American families.

As is now well known, the German army did not make any serious assault on the forts around the French capital, but contented themselves repulsing sorties made by the French, and finally starved Paris into surrendering. As it would be several weeks before Paris surrendered, Sheridan determined to spend the interim in seeing other places of interest in Europe. On the 14th of October he went to Sedan, and from there to Brussels, where he was dined by the King and Queen of Belgium and met many notable people. He then visited Vienna and the Hungarian capital, Buda-Pesth; went down the "Blue Danube" to Varna, and then through the Black Sea to Constantinople. Here the Grand Vizier welcomed him. It was a time when the Mohammedans were keeping a fast, from sunrise each day until sunset. The Grand Vizier took him in a carriage where he could see the Sultan on the Esplanade, when he and his little son rode on horseback to the mosque. Afterwards he reviewed all the Turkish troops at Stamboul. He was delighted with the climate and was tempted to linger, and set out regretfully on his return journey.

After this he stopped a few days at Athens; was informally received by the King and Queen; and of course visited the Acropolis and other points of interest. He visited Sicily, Naples, and Pompeii. At the latter place a special excavation was made and articles of the buried city presented to him. Of course, as a good Catholic, he visited Rome, but whether or not he saw the "Holy Father" we do not know. He then went to Florence, where he was presented to the King, Victor Emmanuel, whose conversation was principally about hunting. He said to Sheridan that he did not want to be King, and expressed regrets that he could not pass his days in hunting. He invited Sheridan to go to his estate to hunt deer, an invitation which he gladly accepted. He killed eleven deer that were driven before him.

He returned to Paris in season to see the triumphal entry of the German army into the French capital. There was no disturbance as the German army moved down the Champs-Élysées to the Place de la Concorde. He found everywhere the disposition to make Louis Napoleon the scapegoat for the national misfortunes.

After paying his respects to the Emperor William,—for he had been so proclaimed January 18th—Sheridan took leave of Bismarck and General Von Moltke. He remained in Paris until the latter part of March with our Minister, E. B. Washburn, and was the recipient of many attentions. General Forsyth is reported to have said, "His fame had reached France in advance, and its people, from his vim and dash, had already likened him to and placed him on

the same high pedestal of fame with the great Napoleon."

In a letter to General Grant, written in the confidence of personal friendship, he said when speaking of his observations abroad: "I have been able to observe the difference between the European battles and those of our own country. I have not found the difference very great, but that difference is to the credit of our own country. There is nothing to be learned here professionally, and it is a satisfaction to know that such is the case. There is much, however, that Europeans could learn from us,—the use of rifle-pits, the use of cavalry, which they do not use well; . . . there are hundreds of things in which they are behind us."

After the German army had withdrawn from Paris, Sheridan visited Ireland, Scotland, and England, and returned to his native land more in love with it than ever before.



## CHAPTER XXIX

### SHERIDAN'S BUSY LIFE IN TIME OF PEACE

RETURNING in 1871, after a year's absence of travel abroad, the lieutenant-general took up his residence in Chicago and resumed his command of the Military Division of Missouri. He made his home on Michigan Avenue and was glad to be once more with his Chicago friends. He was cheery and full of life and activity. It was impossible for him to remain idle; so, instead of putting the work upon his subordinates, he personally supervised the affairs of his division, regulating the expenditures of large sums of public money with careful economy and vigilantly overseeing the affairs of his great division.

He was scarcely well settled down to his work, when the disastrous fire of Oct. 8, which nearly destroyed Chicago, occurred. It is said that the fire began in a small frame barn where an old Irish woman's cow kicked over a kerosene lamp by the light of which she was milking; and the widow O'Leary's cow will no doubt pass into history, in another way, with the famous geese that saved Rome.

A fierce wind was blowing at the time, and although the fire department fought the flames with heroic exertion, and with a loss of some lives and the destruction of most of its apparatus, yet the fire spread

from house to house and from street to street with appalling quickness. Nothing seemed able to stay its course. Great tongues of flame reached out and licked up granite and brick impartially, until the most densely populated portion of the city was a chaotic mass of charred and blackened ruins. All efforts to stay the destruction were impotent, and by the 9th all the northern part of the city and the business portions in the south division went down before the awful conflagration.

Sheridan's residence was on the south side, and it was midnight before he became aware of how serious a calamity was threatened. He was on the way to his headquarters, when he found his progress stopped by a barrier of fire. Here property owners and men of affairs gathered around him, asking for advice and assistance. Thus appealed to, he got together his staff and with clear perception and cool judgment organized for the work of saving the city. He checked the flames at different points by destroying buildings, assembled what remained of the crippled fire department and its apparatus and set them systematically at work, and did all that was possible with the means at hand to bring the fire under control.

The flames, however, were not the only elements to be feared. The people were panic-stricken and falling into disorder, and the mayor was powerless to control them. Drunkenness, robbery, disorder, and lawlessness prevailed. Men ordinarily cool lost their mental balance, and did foolish or extravagant things,—believing idle rumors, losing confidence in

each other, and giving way to fears that had no foundation in facts. One wealthy woman was seen to throw away her jewel-case, with the remark that the end of the world had come and that she did not wish to appear before her Maker with such gew-gaws in her hands. Men had begun to despair over the conditions, fearing another conflagration, or worse, that the criminal element would get control of the city.

Recognizing, by what Sheridan had already done so well, a masterful commander of men, and seeing already the benefits of the organization he had effected, the representatives of a mass meeting of the leading citizens called on him to guard them, not only from the fire, but from disorder and lawlessness. The appeal was not in vain. He set at work at once to protect what property was left and to obtain food and shelter for the thousands of homeless people. With characteristic energy and decision he summoned his soldiers from distant points to keep order and to guard persons and property.

By the 12th of October the fire was subdued, rations ordered to feed the hungry thousands, and tents to shelter the homeless. In two days the people were being systematically fed and sheltered, all without conflicting with the state or municipal authorities. The citizens hailed Sheridan as their deliverer, and President Grant commended him with liberal praise.

There are many anecdotes told of Sheridan at this time. A hotel that had been saved from the flames

opened for business. Complaints were made to him about its extravagant charges to guests.

"What are they charging?" inquired Sheridan.

"Six dollars a day."

"What was the price before the fire?"

"Two dollars and a half."

"All right," said Sheridan, "I will run the hotel myself at that price!" And he put it in charge of an orderly and ran it at \$2.50 a day until order was fully established in the city.

The city under his control was so peaceful that a newspaper reporter could get no startling news for a good story for the press and felt compelled to invent some in this form, "Seven incendiaries have just been shot for kindling fires in the city;" and the next day he reported, "Several hung from the lamp-posts!" The next day Sheridan got a sarcastic note inquiring "if it was not possible to put out the flames with gore."

The people were grateful to Sheridan for what he had done, though some politicians who were impotent to do anything themselves tried to belittle his efforts and to make capital out of his assuming command.

In 1874 Sheridan was married to Irene M. Rucker, whose father was General Daniel Rucker, a retired quartermaster-general of the United States Army. Miss Rucker was born at Fort Union on the frontier, amidst the alarms of Indian wars, while her father was serving as a depot quartermaster. She was a fitting mate for the hero soldier.

The year of his marriage the city of Chicago was

again threatened with a repetition of the same kind of calamity as the great fire, and was again indebted to him for help in saving the city from ruin and disorder by his prompt action and good judgment. When the communistic riots—so destructive in other cities—threatened the peace of Chicago, his action prevented another public misfortune. He showed in all this his strong characteristic of being able to do things. He did not allow red tape or forms to hamper him in great public emergencies, but cut them; thus displaying great moral as well as physical courage.

In 1872 the Grand Duke Alexis of Russia was in this country, and at a state dinner tendered him by President Grant, General Sheridan sat next to the Prince. In course of conversation the Grand Duke was roused to so great enthusiasm by Sheridan's descriptions of buffalo hunting that he resolved to extend his tour in order to take part in a hunt.

A special train conveyed the party to the North Platte, where they were met by "Buffalo Bill," who escorted them to a camp which had been pitched for the purpose with romantic surroundings of wood and bluff and stream, and where a near-by camp of Brulé Indians added romance and wildness to the scene. The Indians, under their chief, Spotted Tail, were to join in the hunt for the entertainment of Prince Alexis. When all was ready a short ride brought the party near the first herd of buffalo the Grand Duke had ever seen. With Sheridan, Custer, and Buffalo Bill he made an onslaught on the herd, the other Russians of his party first awaiting the success of their



Prince. After the hunt, it was shown that the Prince had a score of nine buffalo out of twenty-eight that had been killed by the party.

On the Prince's expressing curiosity about the use of the Indian bow and arrow, Sheridan directed one of the Indians, called "Red Leaf," to give an exhibition of its use by killing a buffalo in sight. Alexis was much pleased with his skill, and rewarded Red Leaf and bought his bow and quiver at a princely price. At the close of the hunt the Indians gave a war-dance, after which the chief, Spotted Tail, made an eloquent speech, to which Sheridan replied.

The Grand Duke was enthusiastic over this hunt, and when Sheridan got intelligence of another great herd of buffalo, he expressed his desire to go after it. In the former hunt trained horses that were accustomed to buffalo had been used to mount the party; but in the second one cavalry horses were used, and these became frightened and carried their riders away from instead of to the game. Afterwards, another herd being discovered, each man singled out a buffalo and pursued it with success amid great excitement.

When Alexis returned to Russia, the Emperor sent a letter thanking Sheridan for the reception "tendered the Prince in the Western States of America."

In 1872 the Department of Texas was added to Sheridan's territory, making about a million and a half square miles within its limits, and embracing the reservations to which the treaty of 1869 assigned the hostile Indians. The Sioux numbered about forty thousand, and the Cheyennes, Arapahoes, Kiowas,

and Comanches about twenty thousand more. These Plains Indians were primitive savages, and regarded every effort to keep them within certain limits as a trespass upon their rights. They had been placed on reservations, where the agents were often dishonest and unscrupulous, and also among frontiersmen who preyed upon and robbed them. Sheridan endeavored to get laws enacted to punish lawless whites who encroached upon the Indian lands and rights, as well as Indians who did wrong, and to establish courts at the agencies to enforce them.

In the northern part of Sheridan's command, where the great Sioux Reservation was located, up to 1874 there had been comparative quiet. But the encroachments of settlers made the tribes restless, and Sheridan, to prevent trouble which he foresaw in the future, sent General George Custer in 1875 on an expedition to locate places for new posts in the Black Hills and Forsyth on a similar errand to the Yellowstone.

Upon receiving the proper information, Sheridan planned several large posts at strategic points, that would have enabled him to control the hitherto almost inaccessible region to which the Indians fled when pursued. Custer's report of mineral riches led to an influx of miners into the Black Hills, and this made the necessity for these new posts still more apparent. But Sheridan, with all his urging, could not get Congress to sanction their establishment until after the terrible massacre of General Custer and his men, of which we shall write in coming paragraphs. Then public sentiment compelled Congress to authorize

them, and Sheridan's far-seeing policy was vindicated.

After all the efforts of the Indian Bureau had failed to get the Indians to settle down upon the reservations, the Bureau at last turned over their control to the War Department.

To carry out the wishes of Congress, Sheridan planned two winter expeditions,—one under General Crook and another under General Terry; but for reasons not needful to narrate, both of these expeditions failed, and a summer campaign was resolved upon.

General Crook concentrated his force, of about one thousand men, at Fort Fetterman. He found the Indians under Chief Crazy Horse eager for battle. In a fight that soon occurred they took the offensive, and it was only after desperate fighting that the Indians were compelled to retreat to the Big Horn River. There they united their forces with the tribes under Chief Sitting Bull.

Terry began operations earlier than Crook, with a force of forty-seven officers and nine hundred men. The command reached Powder River, twenty miles above its mouth, the first of July. On the 10th, while he established a depot of supplies, Crook sent Major Reno with six troops of the Seventh Cavalry to cross the river and examine Tongue River. On the 18th, by mistake Reno had reached the mouth of the Rosebud River, where he struck a trail that indicated the presence of Indians and enabled Terry to locate their camp.

In the execution of the plan which he formed to

strike a concerted blow, Terry sent General Gibbon up the Yellowstone, and the next day Custer with six hundred and fifty men pushed on and by the 25th was south of the Indian camp. First sending Major Reno with a battalion of three troops, and Captain Batoon with a similar battalion, Custer retained five troops under his own control. When near the Big Horn, Custer sent Reno forward to charge the head of the Indian village. Reno found, instead of merely the forces of Sitting Bull, that he was confronted by the combined forces of Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull. He acted very judiciously and, instead of charging, got into a position in some timber that was perfect for defense, and from which, if he had stayed there, it is doubtful if the Indians could have dislodged him with all their force. But he lost his nerve and began to give conflicting orders; a rush for the horses took place, when the savages, comprehending the demoralized condition of the whites, charged them and killed three officers and twenty-nine men.

Custer had, meanwhile, advanced at a trot with his troops down the right bank of the river. The details of what happened after this will never be known. He was attacked in front and rear by overwhelming numbers, and that was the last of the gallant Custer. He, and all of the men with him, were killed. Two days after, when his dead body and those of his command were discovered, there were indications that he and his little band had made a desperate fight. By the side of each dead soldier there were found little piles of empty cartridge shells,—in some cases as many as



A SIOUX WAR - PARTY.

Drawn by F. Colburn Clarke. From "The Great Salt Lake Trail," by courtesy of Crane & Co., Publishers.



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thirty,—as witnesses of the desperate but vain resistance these brave men and their commander had made. That the Indians had lost heavily is shown by the fact that upon the approach of a comparatively small force, they abandoned the battlefield and their village also.

When winter came Sheridan had gathered most of the Indians on reservations. He took away their arms and sold their ponies, and bought cattle for the Indians with the money thus obtained; for he was determined that a repetition of these horrors should not occur.

## CHAPTER XXX

### THE GENERAL RECEIVES FINAL MARCHING ORDERS

SHERIDAN still looked as he did during the Civil War—every inch a soldier. His face, head, and carriage expressed unmistakable nervous force and vigor. He looked like a ruler of men, and had that sense of power which great responsibility gives. Yet his voice was soft and his manner so modest, and there was so little of assertion in his ordinary ways, that those who met him casually could scarcely believe that he was the man who commanded at Cedar Creek and at Five Forks, and electrified the nation with brilliant victories.

He was a tremendous worker and took but little recreation, but when he did seek relief from labor a favorite method was in angling. It was said that he could fish all day with patience and enjoyment without getting a bite. At one time while out with a party of anglers, and while busy with rod and line, he was accosted by an old farmer, who said: "I understand that General Sheridan and a party are around here somewhere fishing. I don't care about the others, but I should like to see General Sheridan."

"That's easy," said Sheridan, quietly, "I am the man."

"You!" exclaimed the farmer, in contemptuous

tones. "It isn't likely that a little fellow like you, with that low voice, could command a big army like Sheridan can!"

In December, 1874, President Grant ordered Sheridan to New Orleans, where there was again trouble. A secret military combination known as the "White League" was endeavoring to overthrow the legal government of Louisiana by violent methods. Sheridan had no liking for such duties, but he unflinchingly preserved order, insured the peaceful assembling of the legislature, and, holding the White League in check with a firm hand, taught them that they could not murder and intimidate the freedmen with impunity.

Again, just after the presidential election in November, when Rutherford B. Hayes and Samuel J. Tilden were presidential candidates, Grant required Sheridan to take command of military affairs in Louisiana, to prevent threatened fraud and violence by what was called the "shot-gun policy." There was, at first, great excitement over his coming. He announced that he was there only to protect the regular authorities in the discharge of their duties and not to take part in canvassing the returns. By his presence in New Orleans the conspiracy of the White League to give the state to Tilden as President and to Nichols as Governor, by fraud and violence, was defeated and the White League's attempt to usurp the government failed once more.

As I have said elsewhere, Congress had authorized the construction of the military posts recommended by Sheridan to protect the settlers and restrain the In-

dians. For the purpose of informing himself about these posts, during the summer of 1877 he visited the Northwest and made a personal reconnaissance through the Big Horn Mountains. But while attending to these duties he received a pressing order from President Hayes to proceed to Chicago to take charge of the troops there and suppress riots growing out of the labor troubles. The first day of his arrival in Chicago the troubles ceased. The people, without regard to party, applauded his course.

Sheridan had thoroughly studied the Indian question, and believed that much of this trouble might have been prevented if their affairs had been honestly administered. He interceded with the Government to obtain for them more honest treatment. The Secretary of the Interior denied that injustice had been done the Indians and demanded evidence of mismanagement of the affairs by his Department. Sheridan in reply overwhelmed him with detailed reports from his own bureau covering a period of years.

This controversy and Sheridan's intimate knowledge of the subject worked to the advantage of the Indians, by exciting the interest of prominent men in Congress and ultimately bringing about many reforms, most of which were suggested by Sheridan.

The Northern Cheyennes, against the protest of Sheridan who knew the affection of the Indians for their own territory, were sent to the reservation of the Southern Cheyennes. The Northern Indians demanded to be returned to the land of their birth, and, this demand being unheeded, they fled across the Ar-



kansas River. The troops pursued, and thus occurred another small war, which might have been avoided by following Sheridan's advice.

Sheridan made himself master of everything he touched. His report of his reconnaissance through the Big Horn Mountains and the Northwest attracted much attention, and was recognized as very valuable. He made several of these expeditions, the reports of which greatly interested President Arthur and other officials. On his last tour he was accompanied by President Arthur, Robert T. Lincoln, Secretary of War, and several other state and national officials.

In 1883, when at his own request General Sherman was relieved from the command of the army of the United States and placed upon the retired list, President Arthur summoned Sheridan to Washington to assume the duties of commanding general. He left Chicago to take up this new work with great regret; for it obliged him to give up his agreeable surroundings and to sunder ties of friendship. The citizens of Chicago were loath to part with him, and at his leaving a dinner was tendered him by the Commercial Club. In a notable speech a prominent member of the club expressed the appreciation of the people of Chicago for Sheridan's great services, in these words: "Chicago can never forget General Sheridan! When this city was in flames, when men's hearts failed them and ruin and desolation stared us in the face, all eyes were turned to him whom we honor here this evening; . . . when every moment was precious, without waiting to consult the authorities at Washington he or-

dered troops and rations . . . and thereby averted riot and bloodshed and helped many thousands of our people to survive the severe trials of the time."

During the following year there was comparatively little for the army to do, yet Sheridan was incessantly active. He studied the needs of the army and, looking to its future usefulness, recommended the building of comfortable barracks near large railroad centers and great cities. He also gave attention to perfecting a general system of coast fortifications. For though, like all great soldiers, he did not believe in resorting to war for redressing wrongs until all other means failed, he realized, as no mere theoretical peace advocate can, that it is not strength but weakness that provokes attack from other nations. He therefore advocated that this country should keep in the front ranks with other nations in preparation for war as the best means of preserving peace. He was a fervent advocate of arbitration for the settlement of national disputes. In almost the last speech he ever made, which was at the Centennial of the Constitution at Philadelphia, he impressively said: "There is one thing we should appreciate, and that is that the improvement in guns and in the material of war, in dynamite and other explosives, will bring us to a period when war will eliminate itself . . . and we shall have to resort to something else. Now what will that something be? *It will be arbitration.* If any one here could live until the next Centennial, he would find that *arbitration rules the world.*"

When Grover Cleveland was President, Sheridan's



A MEMORABLE GATHERING OF ARMY OFFICERS.

To meet Gen. Grenville M. Dodge, Chief Engineer Union Pacific Ry., at time of completion of the railway to Laramie Plains, 1867. Left to right: Gen. August Kautz, Gen. Sheridan, Mrs. Potter, Gen. Frederick Dent, Mrs. Gibbon, Gen. Gibbon, Master Gibbon, Gen. U. S. Grant, Katie Gibbon, Mrs. Kilburn, Gen. Grenville M. Dodge (in the door), Allie Potter, Gen. W. T. Sherman, Gen. W. S. Harney, Dr. T. C. Durant, Gen. Slemmer, Gen. Potter, Gen. Louis C. Hunt.



relations with him were extremely cordial. The President admired the great soldier, though they belonged to different political parties, and though Sheridan took no part in politics unless forced to do so in obedience to the orders of his superiors. Mr. Cleveland asked and accepted his advice in all matters connected with the control of the Indians and in the appointment of military officers.

In 1884 the President requested his assistance in settling the disturbances on the reservations of the Cheyennes and Arapahoes caused by the Indian Bureau permitting the cattlemen and others to lease land belonging to the Indians. The boundaries in these leases were often imaginary, or at least poorly defined, and this led to trouble. When the misunderstanding between the cattlemen and Indians became so acute as to threaten the peace, Sheridan recommended that the leases be annulled as the best means of preventing a disturbance. Notwithstanding the protests of prominent capitalists and cattle companies of the East, President Cleveland took his advice, with the most salutary results.

This just action prevented further disquiet among those Indians, and the only section where there were now disturbances was in Arizona. Here the Apaches and Chirichue Indians had been placed upon reservations, but a disagreement of the officials of two government departments made the Indians lose confidence in both of them. While the older men remained on their reservations, the young warriors went on the war-path. The troops did not have good success in



conquering them. Sheridan, however, saw that the trouble was that the Indians on the reservations harbored the young braves, and often hid them when they were hunted for. He therefore recommended that the Indians be removed to prevent this. Then, after a long talk and longer delays, Geronimo and his braves agreed to surrender and were coming into the fort when, hearing rumors that they were to be punished, they took alarm and fled to the mountains. Sheridan then put General Miles in command who soon brought the unruly Indians of Arizona under control.

In the very midst of his usefulness and activities, and apparently in the prime of his mental and physical strength, General Sheridan was made aware that he must soon answer a command which all, however useful or powerful, have to obey. He was informed by his physician, in November, 1887, of the fatal nature of a trouble with which he was afflicted. His life depended upon physical and mental rest, for he had heart disease. He had never been very sick in all his life of intense effort, his strength had not failed him, and so he still continued to work till the last.

In May, 1888, however, shortly after he had been on an inspection tour in the West, a severe attack prostrated him. He was so solicitous that his old mother, who was sick at the time, should not be alarmed, that the news was kept from the public for a time. In two or three weeks he had another attack, so severe that he was kept alive only by resorting to extraordinary remedies. During this sickness Congress revived in his favor the grade of general, which

had lapsed with the retirement of General Sherman. President Cleveland at once approved the Act and sent him his commission as General of the Army, a position that had before been held only by Grant and Sherman.

This act of President Cleveland gratified the dying hero so much that for the moment his disease seemed abated and his friends hoped against hope for his recovery. All through his illness his courage and good nature were wonderful. After one of his attacks, when it seemed as if he would never revive, he would say to his doctor, "I almost got away from you that time, doctor!"

The hot weather was hard for him to bear, and so he was removed, the last of June, to his summer cottage at Nonquit, on Buzzard's Bay, Massachusetts. Here by the sea, which seemed to be sobbing for the dying hero, the great patriot soldier, who had done so much to redeem the country that he loved, fell asleep, August 5, 1888, as quietly as an infant in its mother's arms. His last march had been made and "Little Phil," as his soldiers lovingly called him, and name him still, had moved into line with comrades who had preceded him on the march of eternity, in obedience to the orders of the Great Commander of us all.

If Ireland was ever a debtor to this country for vindicating the manhood of her exiled children, this son of an Irish immigrant, by the priceless services he rendered to this dear land that he loved, had paid it all and more.

His memory will ever carry a precious lesson of patriotism and valor to American youth, and his career will act as an incentive to all who labor upward in life under difficulties. Reared in an obscure village, born of poor and laboring people, with no other help than a military education, he raised himself, by devotion to duty and by hard work in preparation for battle, from grade to grade, each of his promotions, except the last, dating from a great victory that he had won or been instrumental in winning. Finally he became the head of our army and one of the foremost and most brilliant soldiers of the world. He was enthusiastically loyal to his country in her hour of need, and his love for her was as unfeigned as it was devoted and ardent. He leaves to American youth a forceful example of a patriotic American soldier, worthy of their imitation and loving reverence.

It was by his own desire that General Sheridan was buried at Arlington on the banks of the Potomac, among the soldiers whom he loved and who loved him; and in this wish was mirrored the spirit of that democracy of which he was a strong and simple product.

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